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KILLER

89
AUGUST
2005

ACCELERATING MUSIC AND CULTURE

IT'S TRUE & REAL

HIP-HOP WARRIORS
LITTLE BROTHER
HOLD IT DOWN



The 25 Best Independent Labels : Fixed Gears : The Misfits vs. Morrissey

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A black cable with a standard three-pronged power connector is shown entering the word 'PRODUCTION' from the right side.

PRODUCTION



89 CONTENTS

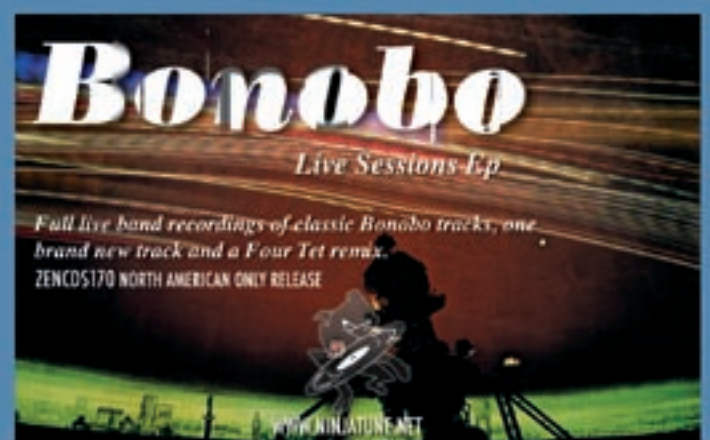
- 16 Monika Enterprise
- 18 Boom Bap Project
- 21 Whitey
- 24 Moonstarr
- 28 South Rakkas Crew
- 30 Matthew Jonson
- 36 Little Brother
- 42 Public Enemy
- 46 Prince Paul
- 50 Labels We Love
- 56 Luke Vibert
- 58 Headman
- 60 Style: Track City
- 69 Reviews
- 92 Lucky 13
- 94 In the Studio: Eclectic Method
- 96 Machines: Components
- 100 Vis-Ed: Os Gemeos
- 104 TBC

Maurice, Sarah, Monkey, Dini, and Dave at San Francisco's Pier 2. The Embarrasadero. Photo by Christopher Woodcock



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ED'S RANT A MATTER OF FACT



This issue was hard. I can't even lie. After this issue, I could write a 53-page treatise on everything that's wrong with hip-hop, based on all the hurdles we had to jump through between publicists, managers, and the artists themselves. I think I understand why people say the music business is ruining music.

Then again, part of being super passionate about anything is getting totally, completely exasperated with it at times. Fortunately, we're surrounded by people that pick us up when our inspiration is flagging. I'd like to thank Montreal writer Raf Katigbak for teaching me how to swear in Quebecois, Brazilian writer Bruno Natal for coming through with some links to dope Brazilian graffiti from Speto and the Fleshbeck Crew, and my friend Ian for IMing an mp3 of the "Super Hyphy Remix." I'd also like to thank Michael Prommer for decoding the 6 Hole Records family for me, graphic designer Jon Santos for tipping us off to his super Smurfing NewWaveFunk mix, and Beanbag Café down the street for finally giving us a discount after we've been eating there every day for the last five years. Finally, thanks to Patty at Trackstar for giving me a spin on her fixie in Bushwick; no thanks to my tight pants.

So now I'm ready to plow through piles of promo CDs and start the whole thing over again. And while I usually use my Ed's Rant to break down the content of the issue, I think this one speaks for itself. Instead, here's a little list so you can get to know us better:

- Office dogs in New York:** none
- Office dogs in San Francisco:** four
- August deadline dance parties:** two
- New dances created:** The Expo [Marker], The Hot Foot, The White Boot Scoot, The Oh No You Didn't!, The Oh Yes You Did!, The Whiskey Dick
- Number of times editor talked to art director like Yoda while wielding tiny Yoda figurine:** five
- Approximate number of calls writer Scott Thill made to Paris and Chuck D, and their managers and publicists:** 24
- Number of phone calls from XLR8R office to Little Brother's publicist:** 10
- Number of cities featured in bike shoot:** four
- Number of times we had to re-do the Portland bike shoot:** three
- Monkeys featured in bike shoot:** one
- Times reviewers overused the word "indeed":** 12
- Best excuse for turning in an assignment late:** "My band went on tour."
- Worst excuse:** "I had to drive my friend's friend to the hospital when her baby got a 102 fever."
- Number of full-time staff at XLR8R:** 10
- Most staffers wearing Adidas shoes at one time without coordinating:** seven
- Times "Duuuuuuude!" was uttered by the publisher:** 20
- Number of beers drank with straws:** eight
- Car accidents seen from XLR8R window in a week and a half:** four
- Number of consecutive days Brianna has listened to the Battles EPs:** 21
- Number of cardboard guitars in the office:** two
- Times we've done karaoke to Heart's "Magic Man" in the last week:** five
- Number of times we'd do it all again:** infinite

-Vivian Host, Editor

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PUBLIC ENEMY *Rebirth Of A Nation*



All new studio album produced by Paris featuring: Dead Prez, MC Ren, & Immortal Technique. (Guerrilla Funk)



MOTION PICTURES
Motion Pictures
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ON THE COVER: Little Brother by Evaq; original photo by Dustin Ross

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Where DJs Call Home



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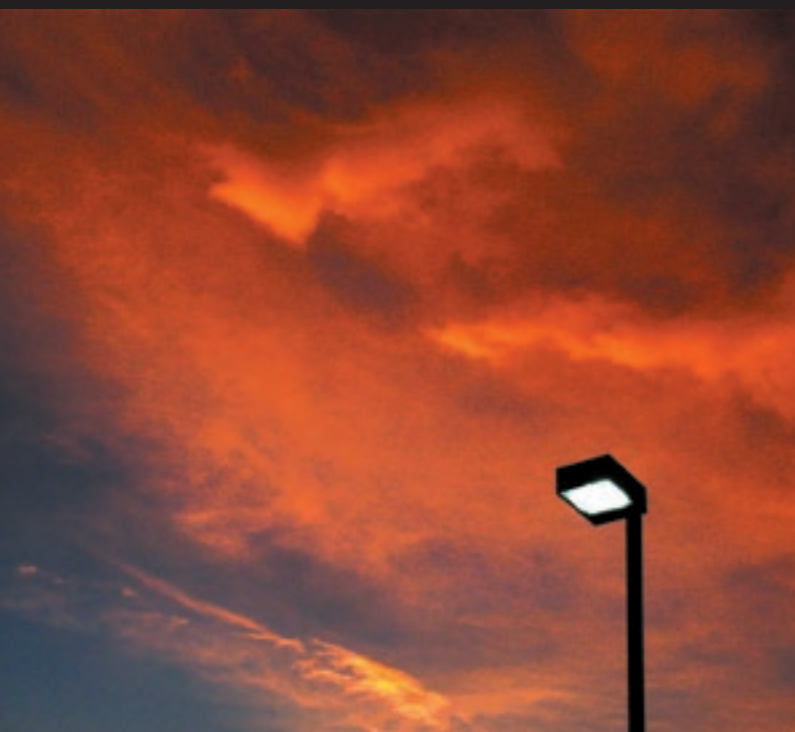
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This limited edition book, featuring photography by Christopher Woodcock, is available for sale at all adidas Originals Stores and at adidas.com.

XLR8R



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Our Lady of the Skies

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Asif Mian is a New York-based artist, designer, and video director. Self-taught in graphic design, animation, and video, he has a background in drawing, painting, and sculpting beginning from an early age. Recently, Asif has directed music videos, including work for Aesop Rock and The Roots, and has exhibited his artwork internationally and designed for print and fashion. For the cover image of Little Brother, Asif took objects from his little brother's room to create the scene. www.evaq.com



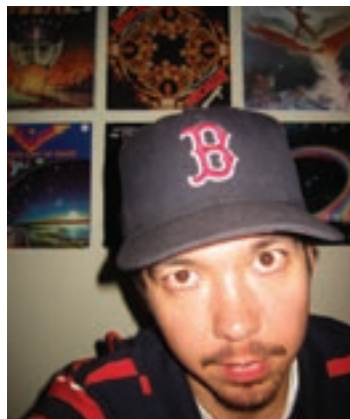
DUSTIN ROSS

Brooklyn, New York's Dustin Ross started shooting photos in college, following an influential trip to Morocco where he got back some amazing rolls taken on his mom's point-and-shoot. His current work is primarily documentation, but he strives to think graphically about composition, color, tonality, and other technicalities that make up a "good" photograph. Balancing technical excellence with conceptual profundity is Dustin's ongoing mission, and a balanced existence is how he would prefer to tread in the world.



JESSE TERRY

After many happy times cavorting in the *XLR8R* playground, Jesse has decided to take on a job in the New York City office of German music-making software company Ableton. There were a few reasons for his departure: his computer couldn't fit any more plug-ins, the endless cash and chicks were getting in the way of making music and watching sports, and writers like that fool Brolin kept biting his style. Jesse is happily looking forward to weekend bus rides to Philly to catch Donovan McNabb in action all season.



BROLIN WINNING

Residing in the Mission by way of Western Massachusetts, Brolin has been doing the writer thing for six years now, after retiring from the cook game. In addition to *XLR8R*, he also contributes to *Elemental*, *Remix*, *AllHipHop*, *Vinyl Exchange*, and various other spots. When he's not expounding on the latest obscure 12-inch or hobnobbing with famous rappers, he is often DJing around the city or holed up in the lab priming the next release from his label, 442 Records. In his free time Brolin enjoys throwing BBQs, shooting pool, and fly fishing.





LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Like us? Hate us? Write us! Email letters to letters@xlr8r.com or send mail to XLR8R Magazine 1388 Haight Street #105 San Francisco, CA 94117.

of good pushing new artists, ideas, and fresh music. I live in Chicago (where house is a way of life and not a trend). I work for an entertainment company that has absolutely no clue on the happenings within influential music. That said, thanks a million for pushing reggaeton on the [Incite] CD and in the text. There is a real sense of rawness and sexiness that is rooted deep in this genre. Much like house, it has a soul that makes us all sweat. Keep movin' and expect to hear more from me. And, oh yeah, you guys have the best designers and guest artists this side of the pond. Love the style and I hear you with the Sharpie. Keep me reading boss!

Eamon Madigan, Chicago, IL

Technology Embraced

I've been reading your magazine for over a year, and while I enjoy all of the music articles and reviews you do, I was really excited by the "Technarchy" segment in this month's issue [issue #87]. I realize you are primarily a music magazine, but it was nice to see articles on technology-based art and subversive computing, which also relate to your main themes. I am wondering if this will be a recurring segment or if you will be publishing any articles like this in the future? If you will be publishing anything else like this soon, I'd love to send a few queries and contribute an article to this segment.

Roshan Abraham, Syosset, NY

Vivian replies:

Glad you liked our Technarchy piece; we had insider help from Abe Burmeister and Daniel Perlin, both of whom are involved in making technology-based art. We periodically run articles that explore this side of digital culture, from explaining how to take apart and rewire Speak 'n' Spells and Xboxes to musing on how cellphones are changing our culture. As always, we love to hear your feedback on what you'd like to see covered in the magazine.

Good Rep

I was in Los Angeles last week but just returned and saw the article on neuroTransmitter in this month's XLR8R. I wanted to thank you for representing us so well in your magazine. Great working with you and hope to do more of it in the future. Ciao,
Angel (Neurotransmitter:fm)

CORRECTIONS In our June/July issue (#88), we incorrectly stated that Fennesz's Liquid Music DVD is out now; its release is tentatively scheduled for September/October but that is subject to change. Also in the Fennesz article, we referred to Touch Recordings; the label is just called Touch, and is online at www.touchmusic.org.uk.

Mad Love

I am and have been a reader for a bit of time. I began with *URB*. Looking for the newness and ever-changing freshness that is the music culture, I found that *XLR8R* offered a wider range of formats. With all that changes in the industry, I enjoy the banter and design of this publication. Rarely do I read the rags out there that tout the "freshest" and marketable noise that plagues the airways. Instead I find solace in the different and not so main.

You guys and girls do us all a great deal

XLR8R'S "SUMMER MADNESS" CONTEST

Win a killer hip-hop box set and exclusive t-shirts to style yourself for summer.

XLR8R always delivers the inside scoop on the music you love before the mainstream figures it out. This issue's cover feature on Little Brother is further proof, but we decided to up the ante and offer five lucky readers a truly mad music experience in the form of two fantastic prizes. **National Mayhem** is the title of a three-CD box set on **6 Hole Recordings**, home to Little Brother affiliates like MC Big Pooh (part of Atlantic Records group Little Brother with Phonte Coleman and 9th Wonder), The Away Team (the upstart duo of producer Khrysis and MC Sean Boog), and L.E.G.A.C.Y. Hip-hop fans need tight threads, and New York's **Breakbeat Science** delivers the goods—their new line of cut-and-sew shirts are really impressive. Send in your answers to these three brain benders and score big!

1. Name the album by a famous retired NY emcee that Little Brother's 9th Wonder contributed production to.
2. What style of dance music, imported from Britain, did Breakbeat Science popularize in America in the '90s?
3. What tri-city area of North Carolina does Little Brother originate from?

5 Grand Prize Winners will receive: The collector's edition *National Mayhem* three-CD box set from 6 Hole Recordings plus limited cut-and-sew t-shirts from Breakbeat Science.

5 Runners Up Will Receive: Limited edition cut-and-sew t-shirts from Breakbeat Science.

Entries will be accepted via mail and email. Entries must be received by August 10, 2005. Send your answers to XLR8R's "Summer Madness" contest, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email contest@xlr8r.com with "Summer Madness" in the subject line.

www.breakbeatscience.com, www.6hole.com



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Available June 28th on CD & limited edition LP

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-Splendid

2005 SUMMER TOUR

JUNE

Date	City
28	New York, NY Tonic*

JULY

Date	City
27	Columbus, OH High Five Bar
29	New York, NY Tonic
30	Baltimore, MD Talking Head
31	Philadelphia, PA Khyber

All dates w/ Fa She (Shinkoyo) except for:
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** w/ Christopher Willits
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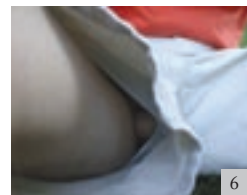
AUGUST

Date	City
1	Washington DC DC9
2	Richmond, VA TBA
3	Chapel Hill, NC Nightlight
4	Knoxville, TN The Pilot Light
5	Champaign, IL TBA
6	St. Louis, MO Radio Cherokee
9	Denver, CO Hi-Dive
11	Salt Lake City, UT TBA
12	Los Angeles, CA TBA
14	San Francisco, CA Hemlock Tavern**
15	Portland, OR Berbat's Pan
16	Seattle, WA TBA
17	Vancouver, BC Butchershop
18	Victoria, BC TBA
19	Missoula, MT TBA
22	Minneapolis, MN Triple Rock
23	Milwaukee, WI TBA
24	Chicago, IL Empty Bottle
25	Ann Arbor, MI TBA
26	Cleveland, OH Grog Shop
27	Providence, RI AS220

free mp3 available at: ghostly.com & shinkoyo.com
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BJ "BITTER" BASTARD'S SUMMERTIME BLUES



It takes a real bastard to hate on summer...and BJ's been standing by all winter, counting the days, hours, and minutes until the first rays of sun shone proudly through the spring storms. Then the air conditioner went out, the parka went on, the cat pissed on the rug, and Bastard started his torrent of humid-ass hate. Minutes before the hard drive crashed, Bastard put all the rage down in a seething email, which was sent to us with a virus attached.

1. Summer Music By the end of summer all the labels are holding on to their releases for a big September push, and most artists are too busy drinking margaritas to make their proposed album release dates. So from June through the end of August we just wait and wait and wait and listen to our old **Happy Mondays** and **Descendents** records until we can't take it anymore.

2. Silly Drinks=Silly Hangovers Speaking of drinking, we always get talked into drinking dumb stuff in the summer that we would never consider any other time, like Zombies, endless tequila shots, Jungle Juice, and things that come in giant coconuts and tiki heads and involve 151 proof. This is all fun and good until you get the monstrous hangover, which is made even worse by the fact that it's 100 degrees outside and you are too broke/lazy/hungover to buy an air conditioner.

3. Neighbors Maybe it's because of the above two reasons—or just that everyone leaves their windows open—but suddenly you know exactly who in your building likes to walk around naked, who has loud, boring sex, and who feels the need to sing along to the entire *Usher: Live in Puerto Rico* at the top of their lungs. Ugh.

4. Not Sleeping It's always really hard to sleep in summer, what with being sweaty and hungover. You can't watch TV because it's all re-runs, so you just stay up all night and listen to your neighbors. There are a few ways to solve this—going to the opposite hemisphere, copping a prescription to Ambien—but we prefer just not even trying to sleep for three months.

5. Bathing Suits We are geeks who spend 10 hours a day chained to our computers. We get in bathing suits once a year for the music conference in Miami, and even then we only go swimming drunk and under the cover of darkness. Basically, we will never be doing an *XLR8R* swimsuit calendar unless Photoshop becomes 1000% times more advanced. Plus, have you ever been in SF in the summer? Shit is foggy, dawg.

6. Sweaty Balls Nuff said.

7. Melting Records In summer, you must be vigilant. If you play at an outdoor festival, you need to have umbrella bitches at the ready to make sure your vinyl doesn't turn into soup on the turntables. And woe is you if you decide to go anywhere other than straight home after the record swap; 10 minutes in the car and that old Minnie Riperton ain't nothin' but an ashtray or a makeshift Frisbee.

8. Bad Clothes Okay, so we all have that one dope tank top, but mainly summer clothes suck. No hooded sweatshirts. No tight jeans (see above entry). Shorts are ugly. Black is impractical. And how about other people? Nothing like pot bellies hanging out, excessive tufts of chest hair, and people in inappropriately short and tight everything to put you off sex until at least October.

9. School's Out Everywhere—especially the movie theaters—is rammed with Mini Me Thugs and wanna be Lindsay Lohans acting a fool. And house parties are so full of underage stallions and stallionettes you practically have to card someone before you hook up.

10. Working When all this is going on, who wants to work?



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MONIKA ENTERPRISE

GUDRUN GUT NURTURES OFFBEAT ELECTRONIC ARTISTS FROM HER BERLIN LIVING ROOM.

WORDS: CAMERON MACDONALD ILLUSTRATION: NIGEL DENNIS WWW.ELECTRICHEAT.ORG

Germany's Monika Enterprise arose from living rooms full of refugees. Label founder Gudrun Gut remembers "the *Wohnzimmer* [living room] scene" of 1997, when homespun venues were some of the only places for underground electronic artists to play in Berlin (as DJs were only welcome in so many techno clubs).

Speaking by phone from her Berlin office, Gut mentions that few labels were interested in developing new artists unless they were chart-bound or one-hit cash-ins. The time was right for building a shelter for those left out. "I started [Monika Enterprise] because I saw all of these artists in Berlin trying to find a place to play," Gut says. "They played in living rooms; that's where Monika came from."

Eventually, huge lines to sit on the sofa sunk the scene, but Gut reminisces about post-techno maven Barbara Morgenstern playing the Vermona organ in Joe Tabu's loft. "I thought, 'Wow, this is fantastic!'" Gut relates. "It was the opposite of a big rock concert because they made it really quiet, really nice; somebody baked some cookies. We did it nice, warm—for the people and not for the industry."

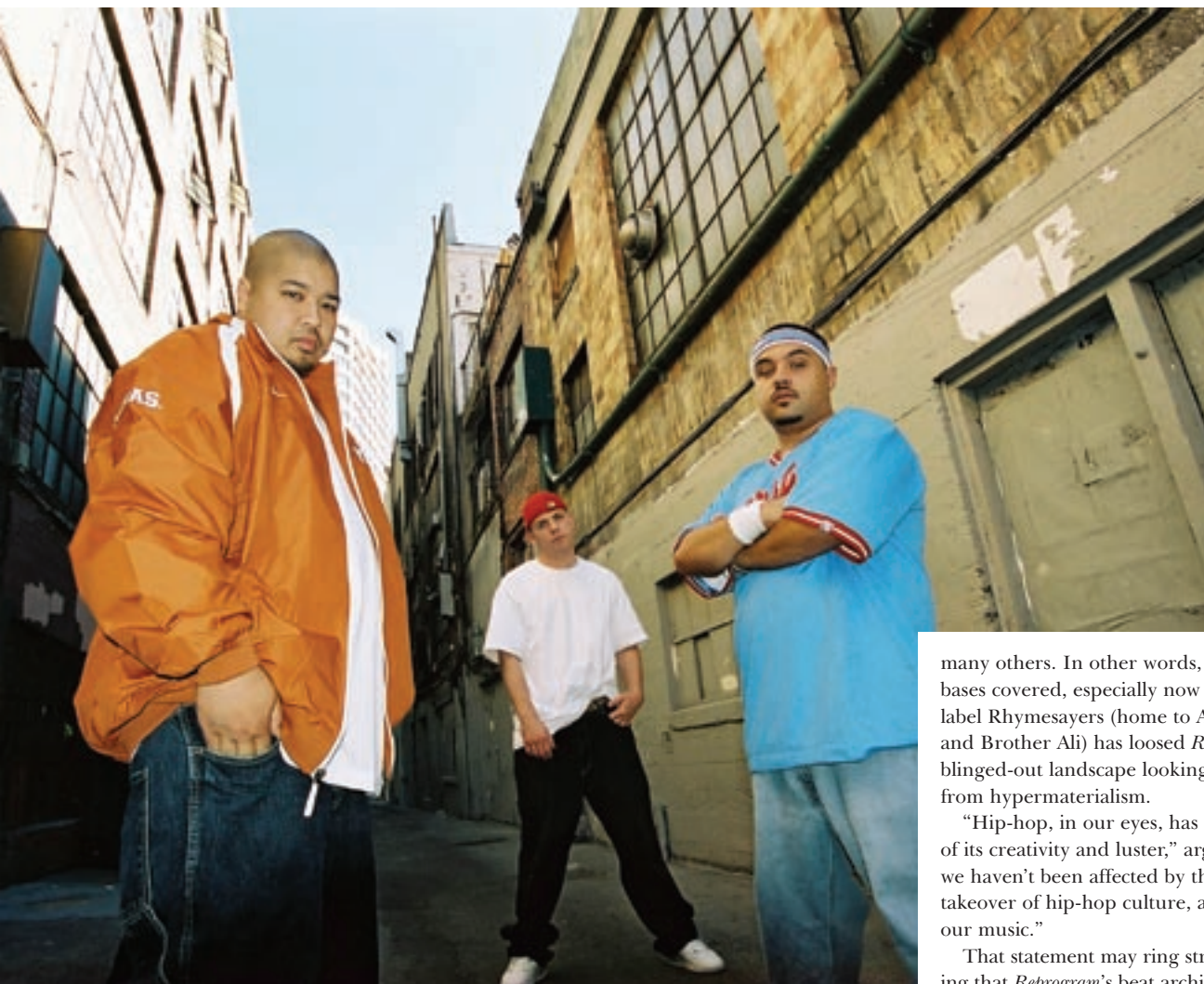
Gut has a history of doing things differently; a former keyboardist for industrial mavericks Einstürzende Neubauten, she later formed all-woman post-punk unit Malaria! (often thought to be Chicks on Speed's godmothers). With Monika, a label named after her suicidal goldfish, she balances a sense of irreverence with a nurturing environment for artists who typically release comforting, slightly discordant, and often baffling post-techno. Such artists include Morgenstern, psychobilly electro-punks Cobra Killer, and post-rockers Contriva. Gut also runs the Moabit label, which has re-issued records by Malaria! and her other bands Miasma and Matador, and released tracks played on the celebrated Ocean Club radio show that she co-DJs with Berlin techno pioneer/The Orb collaborator Thomas Fehlmann.

Gut recently released *4 Women No Cry*, an international compilation that gives 15 minute-plus showcases to four female bedroom electronic musicians/chanteuses: Tusia "TBA" Beridze, Rosario Blefari, Eglantine Gouzy, and Catarina Pratter. The women's music ranges from lounge numbers possessed by Serge Gainsbourg's ghost and narcotic lullabies to post-techno C-scans of the soul. "The music wants to be lived," Gut says. "The own character of the artist stays in the foreground and in the back stands Monika and puts the light on them."

When asked about what direction she wants to take Monika next, Gut has big dreams, literally. "Time takes me," she gushes. "I don't make this kind of business decision, but I'm dreaming of a big Monika house! It should look like an old grand hotel."

4 Women No Cry is out now on Monika Enterprise. www.m-enterprise.de

Monika Enterprise's Cobra Killer, Barbara Morgenstern, and Gudrun Gut



BOOM BAP PROJECT

SEATTLE HIP-HOPPERS LOWER THE BOOM ON MAINSTREAM RAP'S FORMULAS.

WORDS: SCOTT THILL PHOTO: MELANIE MERCER

"The goal of the Boom Bap Project is to preserve the hip-hop culture through music," proclaims MC Karim, known as Nightclubber Lang to those who have helped him and his Boom Bap comrades Destro and DJ Scene build a solid rap foundation in the underrated Pacific Northwest scene. "We came up with the name upon when we decided to make an album chock-full of hard beats and rhymes, true hip-hop shit. The name was not chosen as an homage to anyone or anything, but describes what you're gonna get from us musically."

The Boom Bap Project might still be a work-in-progress, having released only its second album, called *Reprogram*, in the new millennium. But the self-described "true-school" trio still boasts quite the game-tight CV. Not only have all three heads done time as members of the kitchen-sink sonic collective Old Dominion, but they've rocked the mic at the Olympics (in lily-white Salt Lake, of all places) and burned up stages alongside The Roots, Wu-Tang, Blackalicious, and

many others. In other words, they've got their bases covered, especially now that indie-hop label Rhymesayers (home to Atmosphere and Brother Ali) has loosed *Reprogram* on a blinged-out landscape looking for a respite from hypermaterialism.

"Hip-hop, in our eyes, has lost the majority of its creativity and luster," argues Karim, "but we haven't been affected by the mainstream takeover of hip-hop culture, and neither has our music."

That statement may ring strange, considering that *Reprogram's* beat architects are none other than Seattle standouts Vitamin D and Jake One, whose stripped-down compositions have helped Busta Rhymes, 50 Cent, G-Unit, and many more mainstreamers explode. But Boom Bap Project is committed to its local, rain-swept scene, and is deeply invested in positioning a long-overdue spotlight on the Pacific Northwest's thriving hip-hop environment.

"We rep Seattle to the fullest," Karim adds. "Anyone who's ever been there knows that. They know us, our crew Old Dominion, Jasiri, Under the Needle, all the rest. We feel we're making history here, [and the] light is beginning to shine on our region. Seattle has the best producers in hip-hop. Don't sleep."

Good advice, because BBP's self-professed intention is to wake up the world, and *Reprogram* is their hate letter to the status quo. "People today are programmed from birth to go to school, get a 9-to-5, get married, have kids, and live by the rules," says Karim. "But the careers that artists have chosen go against these standards and we aren't going to buy into the program. We don't need to follow those guidelines to be happy or successful in life."

Reprogram is out now on Rhymesayers Entertainment. www.rhymesayers.com

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SOME KINDA HATE

'80s punk and indie music legends at war in Manhattan.

The Mets versus the Yankees. The Jets versus the Sharks. Biggie versus 2Pac. Morrissey versus The Misfits? In a bid to join the most famous rivalries in New York history, a roving Manhattan party is waging a war with the long-running, celeb-infested Morrissey/Smiths tribute night (Sunday nights at West Side bar Sway). Named after the year death punk outfit The Misfits came to life, 1977 is less a club than a concept: fight mopey '80s nostalgia with balls out rock mayhem, stiff drinks, and hot graphic design. The first event, held on June 2 at Lower East Side hole-in-the-wall Motor City, was stuffed full of future rioters singing along to "We Are 138" and "Ratfink"

and clamoring for the Surface 2 Air "Mother" shirts that were given away at midnight. Future parties will feature Misfits cover bands and the likes of Dash Snow and A.R.E. Weapons behind the decks. And even if you're not into name-dropping and drunken antics, the party is still the only place to pick up the limited edition 1977 t-shirts (in quantities of 77, naturally). Michael Sieben (logo design), Alife, Irak, Mike Giant, GHava (flyer shown here), and Brendan Donnelly are just some of the names who've queued up to design mean-spirited graphics that riff on the Morrissey/Misfits feud theme. *Tyra Bangs*

www.its1977.com

INFLUENCES: DJ HARVEY

Renegade disco DJ waxes poetic on his favorite medium.

When I walked into San Francisco's Rx Gallery for shaggy-haired Cambridge ex-pat DJ Harvey's set, it wasn't his signature dubby disco or rare house gems that greeted me, but Michael McDonald's "I Keep Forgetting." A veteran of the UK's Tonka and Ministry of Sound (where he had an infamous late-night residency) as well as NYC's Deep Space and SF's Wicked parties, Harvey's sound is as eclectic as his history—releasing tracks on Noid and Black Cock, remixes for Mo' Wax and Disorient, and drumming in punk and New Wave bands back in the day. Now relocated to Bohemian ground zero, Venice Beach, California, this errant dreamer continues to expand consciousnesses with DJ appearances across the States and a forthcoming album as Map of Africa (with Thomas Bullock of Rub N Tug) on Whatever We Want Records. *Tomas Palermo*

www.whateverwewantrecords.com

DJ Harvey on records: "I think vinyl has no competition as far as sound is concerned—maybe [analog] tape sounds a *little* better. If it's a great [song], it's a great [song]—whether it's on an MP3 or record or whatever. But as soon as the hi-fi that it's playing on becomes a factor, then it's all about records. My head is full of records. "Nude Photo" by Derrick May on Transmat was quite an influential record for me, as was Larry Heard's "Gherkin Jerks" (Gherkin Records). I listened to Bon Jovi's *Wanted Dead Or Alive* five times this morning—that's a fucking wild record man, because he was quite young at the time. Frank Zappa, Captain Beefheart, Deep Purple, Robert Wyatt, Glen Campbell, Bob Marley—I like it all. And if I do find something I don't like, I listen to it to work out why."



WHITEY

CAUSING A RIOT WITH EAST LONDON'S ELECTRO-ROCK POSTER BOY.

WORDS: VIVIAN HOST

By his own admission, the electro-rock powerhouse named Nathan J. Whitey is a lazy, alcoholic bookworm. "I've spent most of my life either drunk or reading," he says, before detailing his new regime. "I drank nothing but Jack [Daniels] for years, but I realized it was making me fat and stupid. I've switched to vodka and fruit juice now, so I'm constantly hydrating myself and pumping myself full of vitamins while I'm drinking." He pauses, watching my black Sharpie commit his words indelibly to lined paper. "But don't make me sound like a health nut."

No danger there. With nearly two years of touring—and a nigh constant hangover—under his belt, East London-based Whitey is finally living the rock 'n' roll dream his tracks promise. Though most of his music—from remixes for Chromeo, Soulwax, and Bloc Party to his April debut, *The Light At The End of The Tunnel Is A Train* (1234)—was made solo, it has a fuck-off swagger that sounds as if an entire sweaty band is trapped in the room with you. Pairing the metronomic garage rock stomp of the White Stripes or The Hives with electronic touches (a vocoded vocal here, tweaky effects there), Whitey has created the purest definition yet of electro-rock, rendering arguments over the differences between "dance rock" and "rock dance" moot.

"When I was young, I was in really shit guitar bands and then I got disenchanted with that," says Whitey of the genesis of his sound. Ditching Iggy Pop rip-offs for rave (a word he hates), he had a string of "rubbish" breakbeat hardcore records released between 1990 and 1995, but continued to listen to The Pixies, Mudhoney, and Fugazi. In 1997, he decided to once and for all combine his influences. "There are incredible sonic similarities between rock and electronic music: how they crash and build up again and surge," he explains. "It seemed perfectly natural to use both."

Using other people's studios—often between two and eight in the morning—Whitey crafted his album tracks in one take each. Amazingly, they sound perfectly natural when performed live by his black-clad band, who wail on guitars and drums while Whitey stands in the middle looking like he raided Elvis Costello's closet: pork pie hat, black suit, and black tie loosened in a louche fashion. Sometimes balls-out, occasionally deadpan, he makes an interesting frontman. "I'm quite honest when I'm on stage," he states. "If I'm tired/crashing horribly then you'll see that, and if I'm excited/rising stiffly then it's different. I like to just gradually get worked up."

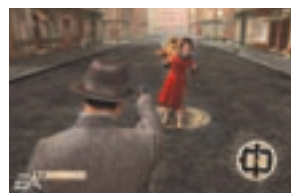
Whitey's *The Light At The End of the Tunnel is A Train* is out now. www.1234records.com



WELCOME TO THE VIDEODROME

XLR8R surveys the annual videogame orgy known as E3.

Hailed as "Heaven on Earth" by virgins everywhere, the annual Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) in L.A. invites journalists and pseudo-celebs to preview the hottest videogames that will be crippling our social lives over the next year. We kept our focus, even as scantily clad vixens tried to push us to play yet another war game where Sgt. What's His Name fights the Battle of Who Really Gives A Fuck. But in the end, our brains were still left hollower than a booth babe's prop plasma gun. After hacking our way through throngs of men with fogged up glasses on the third day, we finally saw some things that piqued our interest. *Ryan Sommer and James Lee*
www.E3expo.com



ChuLips (PS2)
To get ahead in this Japanese title from Natsume you have to trick townspeople into letting you get close enough to kiss them. Spend an evening with it and the new *Katamari Damacy* game for the ultimate cartoon exploitation and human ball-rolling experience. *RS*

Godfather (XBox 360)
Apparently there is this company that makes games called Electronic Arts and they say this movie called the *Godfather* will make an awesome videogame. Come on guys, who's going to buy that? *RS*

50 Cent: Bulletproof (PS2/XBox)
Watching the ultra-violent trailer of the rapper-turned-martial-arts-superstar lobbing off heads with cleavers and hilariously kung fu-ing his opponents had me wondering how the hell this game is going to turn out. *JL*

Nintendogs (DS)
Take care of a puppy on your Nintendo DS by petting and grooming as you rub the touch screen—and try not to let its cuteness set off your gag reflex. Innovative though it was, even as a Korean these little dogs didn't really whet my appetite. *JL*

Odama (GC)
In this insanely original game, set on the battlefields of feudal Japan, you play pinball to paddle a giant wrecking ball into enemy forces and barricades, all the while commanding your army by barking orders into a microphone. *JL*

BATMOBILE VS. BOOTH BABES

Put a girl in any kind of videogame vixen outfit and the camera phones come out of the woodwork, but Bruce Wayne's new ride from *Batman Begins* collected just as much drool at E3. Purely for the sake of science, we compared the two.

Origin

Batmobile: Batman was tired of taking cabs

Booth Babes: Not enough love from their fathers

Tech Appeal

Batmobile: Stealth-angled paneling and variable-angle flaps

Booth Babes: Implanted silicone shells filled with saline

Reason for making an appearance at E3

Batmobile: For the dorks

Booth Babes: For the dorks



ELEMENTS

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Jody Suede Targets by Eighty Twenty
(\$62) www.eightytwenty.com



Matix Futura Jacket
(\$64) www.matixclothing.com



Panda-Z Soap Dispenser and Toothbrush Holder
(both \$24.95) www.kidrobot.com



MOONSTARR

THIS CANADIAN MAKES DRUM MACHINES SING BY MOONLIGHT.

WORDS: PETER NICHOLSON PHOTO: DELPHINE ROUSSEL



He's 6'7" tall, but no, he doesn't play basketball. He's Canadian, but (despite the back cover of his 2002 album *Dupont*) he doesn't play hockey. Kevin Moon a.k.a. Moonstarr's game is making beats, and he's damn good at it.

Just ask Jazzanova or Gilles Peterson or Mad Mats from Raw Fusion—when it comes to rhythms, Moon is a one-man wrecking crew. "I don't play drums, but I do know my samplers pretty well," the soft-spoken producer modestly explains over the phone from his home in Montreal. Take a listen to his absolutely slamming remix of Povo's "Uam Uam" and hear his understatement as precisely chopped snares ricochet off rapid-fire hi-hats, turning an already vibrant tune into a devastating *pièce de résistance* that marries the swing of hip-hop, the drive of drum & bass, and the groove of broken beat.

Maybe Moon's drum fixation is a form of revenge. "When I was in junior high there was a tryout to play drum kit for the year, but of course the really talented drummer beat me out. I felt like I could've been the next Keith Moon!" he says with a rueful laugh. Moon's jones for the beat instead began to take shape through a love of hip-hop, as he bought records like Digital Underground's "Doowutchyalike" while growing up outside of Toronto.

Then came the inevitable move from DJing to production. "As I got older I got inquisitive, like 'How the hell are they looping this shit up?' and I wanted to get behind the technology behind it," says Moon, who started off with a cheap Korg DSS-1 synthesizer/sampler that heavily influenced his sound. "I started out arranging from the get-go...[and] I had an advantage in terms of making songs that were entertaining from start to finish."

Not content with just making his own music, he co-founded Public Transit Recordings and helped spread love for the Toronto scene with the *Code 416* compilation, which included music by LAL, an act that blends hip-hop, South Asian, and electronic influences with politically conscious lyrics. Next up for PTR is a compilation of Moonstarr remixes, including re-rubs of Ivana Santilli and Middlefield.

Proving that there is another side to Moon beyond just beats, a portion of the proceeds from his still-in-the-works solo artist album will go to the David Suzuki Foundation, a Canadian environmental nonprofit. Moon also earmarked some of the profits from his *Detroit* EP to go to The Heidelberg Project, a community arts project in that city. As Moon says, "We're not tree-huggers, but it's inside us and we have to let that side talk every now and then."

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ALL IN ONE
London's inaugural Encompass Festival puts the edge back in the music seminar.

The sun shone brightly for the first annual **Encompass** (a Sonar-style music/business event held April 29-May 1) in London's East End, warming the pallid skin of the hundreds of post-rave trendies, media bloggers, and assorted hipsters that mooched through Brick Lane's trendy cobbled streets. The seminars and media installations got mixed reports but the daytime label showcases went down well, especially Totallyradio.com's Brighton selection and the breakbeat party at 93 Feet East. The eclectic nighttime events were the real draw: over 100 DJs and acts played at six venues, with Metalheadz, 20:20 Vision, Prince Po, Traum, Sonar Kollektiv, Trojan, and Fingerlicking representing. *Paul Sullivan Photos: David Bowen*

www.encompass-london.com

Fireworks: Breakbeat Party at 93 Feet East: TCR/Fingerlicking/Supercharged creating a truly block-rocking atmosphere.

Duds: Sonar Kollektiv's Benny Sings. Picture Simply Red's Mick Hucknall in stripy pantaloons, playing banjo and crooning love songs. This is nu-jazz?

Hearsay: "Curry In A Hurry? No Worry!"—Brick Lane (famous for its Indian restaurants and persuasive staff)

Fashion Statement: Asymmetrical haircuts, torn t-shirts, trailer trash—Shoreditch fashion out in force.

Return trip: First runs are notoriously difficult and this one wasn't bad at all. Next year is bound to be even better.

Above: Inside the Truman Brewery compound; left: Encompass media installation; far left: DJs at Encompass

FOUR FESTIVALS TO DIE FOR



Flow (Aug 19-20, Helsinki, Finland)
Organized by future jazz brigade Nuspirit Helsinki, Flow 05 is being run in collaboration with the Helsinki Festival. Expect acoustic jazz, soul classics, Afro-American folk, and soulful dance from the likes of Omar, Gwen McCrae, King Britt, The Five Corners Quintet, Brian Auger, DJ Kenny "Dope" Gonzalez, and **DJ Spinna**.

www.flowfestival.com

Numusic (Aug 26-28, Stavanger, Norway)
Scandinavia's largest festival dedicated to "the advancement of electronic music" is celebrating its fifth birthday this year. The line-up includes Chicks On Speed, **Jamie Lidell**, David Toop, Luke Vibert, The Bays, and a host of Norwegian talent amidst a backdrop of fjords, mountains, and sea.

www.numusic.no

Bestival (Sept. 9-11, Isle Of Wight, UK)
The second installment of this small but perfectly formed British event is again curated by Rob Da Bank (Sunday Best). This year's well-rounded line up includes headliners Super Furry Animals, **Röyksopp**, St. Etienne, X-Press 2, The Pipettes, The Magic Numbers, British Sea Power, Fabio & Grooverider, Lee Scratch Perry, BITA, Bez (Happy Mondays), Fat Freddy's Drop, and Son Of Dave.

www.bestival.net

Mid Point (Sept. 21-14, Cincinnati, OH)
Where better to hear indie rock than in the region that spawned some of its best acts—America's Midwest, home to such vaunted labels as Touch & Go, Homestead, and Thrill Jockey. Last year's Mid Point Music Festival in Cincinnati (former home to James Brown, Midnight Star, and Afghan Wigs) drew 40,000 people to see 250 bands on 18 stages, and featured the poppy **Campfire Crush**, the garagey Super 77, and the dreamy Infinite Number of Sounds, plus a lot of other soon-to-be-knowns. Check the website for developing line-ups.

www.mpmf.com



SOUTH RAKKAS CREW

BIONIC DANCEHALL RIDDIMS FROM THE PLASTIC HEART OF ORLANDO

WORDS: TOMAS PALERMO PHOTO: TYLER CHASEZ

"I met [producer] Alex G in Canada years ago while I was working security at a rave," says South Rakkas Crew's Dennis "Dow Jones" Shaw of the genesis of his team's musical partnership. "It was during an incident with a naked girl on roller skates, but that's a whole other story."

These days, Shaw is relaxing in sleepy Orlando, Florida, home to the miserable NBA franchise The Magic, Disney's Epcot Center, and lots of evangelical Christians. What there's not a lot of in Orlando is dancehall reggae—that is, until Shaw and his Jamaican compatriots from Toronto arrived.

Comprised of producers Shaw, Alex G, Riprok, and associate member DJ Ninja Kid (their eyes and ears in Jamaica), South Rakkas Crew is rising to prominence in the dancehall world. In three years, the quartet has completed a trifecta of riddim albums (Clappas, Red Alert, and Bionic Ras) that has obliterated the charts, made their way into DJ boxes from Berlin to the Bronx, and

caused major labels to come knocking. In particular, remixes for M.I.A. ("Galang") and Beck have caused their buzz in tastemaker circles to hit critical mass.

South Rakkas' unique sound draws not only on bubbling, jump-up Jamaican rhythms and hand-waving, party-time calypso, but also on shuffling, titanium-smooth techno and sub-bass-driven two-step motifs more common to electronic sub-genres like grime or microhouse. Their decidedly new school flavor is derived via Macs equipped with Logic and ProTools, and plug-ins galore, all of which gives their music its sharp, digital feel. Clappas—one of Greensleeves' all-time top selling riddim albums—draws from King Jammy's Sleng Teng riddim and warps it via a back-and-forth, 3/4-time hopperscotch beat with laser beam synths that march in time. SRC's Red Alert riddim is something completely different: a 120 BPM pop-house monster with just enough island spice to make it a serious crossover contender.

"We are by no means exclusive to dancehall," explains Shaw. "Prior to SRC, we've collectively produced everything from pop to hip-hop to Latin. However, when we are speaking about dancehall we like to keep it separate from anything else going on. We wanted to build the SRC name on our own merits."

The global interest in their music was enough for South Rakkas to launch their own Riddim Riddin series—it debuted with the surging, techy backdrop of Bionic Ras and spawned Sizzla's "Spring Break," which quickly shot to number one on BBC 1Xtra's dancehall chart.

Even with their meteoric success, Shaw and company maintain a down to Earth perspective. "I was born in Jamaica, but lived most of my life in Canada and now the US," reflects Shaw. "I have always wanted to produce dancehall music, and being able to contribute to this music's history is an unbelievable feeling."

www.southrakkascrew.com



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MATHEW JONSON

A CHART-TOPPING TECHNO BUSYBODY FONDLY RECALLS HIS JUNGLE ROOTS. WORDS: PHILIP SHERBURNE

If you were looking for someone to map the incestuous interbreeding of the electronic music community, look no further than Vancouver, BC producer Mathew Jonson.

In the past year, Jonson has become virtually ubiquitous thanks to a steady stream of anthemic insta-classics; last October, with perhaps half a dozen new records hitting the market, he peppered the DJ charts in Germany's *Groove* magazine as A-sides and B-sides alike rose to the top of European playlists. What's more, Jonson—who draws from electro, techno, trance, and downbeat jazz—epitomizes crossover in an era when UK progressive house jocks cane Kompakt *Speicher* singles and gay circuit parties rock Roman Flügel's "Geht's Noch?"

Jonson's recorded for Perlon, Sub Static, M_nus, Kompakt, The Mole's Arbutus imprint, and his own Itiswhatitis label; has had tracks licensed everywhere from Tiefschwarz's *Misch Masch* mix to Carl Craig's *The Workout*; and he's surely the only person ever to have remixed the Chemical Brothers, Swayzak, and ethno-pop sensation Nelly Furtado.

"Actually, my first release on vinyl was for her," confirms Jonson, who turned in a drum

& bass mix for the Canadian singer back in 2000. "We used to hang out and write music before she got signed." Jonson would even back up the fellow British Columbian at her live gigs; nowadays, he's more likely to be spotted backstage with Ricardo Villalobos or Richie Hawtin at a Berlin warehouse party. Despite his sudden ascendancy to minimal techno royalty status, though, Jonson is happy to maintain a life outside "the scene."

"I don't really listen to techno at home," he says. "I prefer listening to hip-hop and R&B. In the clubs, it can be pretty interesting, but I'd say that there's only a small amount of techno being made that I like that much." In truth, Jonson is eager to return to his junglist roots, claiming that he's "itching to get back into drum & bass," specifically the mid-'90s output of outfits like Metalheadz, Moving Shadow, and V Recordings. "I'm totally behind the times," he says, laughing.

His backwards glance isn't unsurprising; Jonson's techno productions sound like they could have been made any time in the past 10 or 15 years—but avoid being preciously retro. This might stem from his preferred working method: slogging it out over hardware in real time rather than getting hung up on computer-based production. This results in the exultant, sweeping productions like "Decompression" and "Love Letter to the Enemy," drum-machine-driven monsters that sound like they'll go on humming long after the vinyl gives out.

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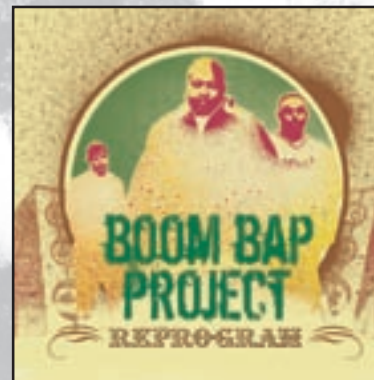
-Buzz Magazine

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"Print crafts original beats that tip their hat to the old school while still sounding brand new...Blueprint is a dope MC and a born storyteller, spinning well-crafted street stories and inspired shit-talk."

-CMJ Monthly



BOOM BAP PROJECT REPROGRAM - CD/2LP - 6/21/05

The full-length debut from Seattle staple and Old Dominion affiliates Boom Bap Project. MC's Karim & Destro along with DJ Scene, deliver 15 tracks of true school original Hip Hop. Featuring guest appearances by **Gift of Gab** (Blackalicious), **Rakaa Irsience** (Dilated Peoples), **Lifesavas**, **Grayskul & DJ Vinroc** (2 Time ITF Champion) and production from **Jake One**, **Vitamin D**, **Bean One & Mr. Hill**.



FELT FELT 2: A TRIBUTE TO LISA BONET - CD/2LP - 7/12/05

Slug (Atmosphere/Rhymesayers) & **Murs** (Living Legends/Def Jux) are back again to give props where props are due... this time it's former cosby kid Lisa Bonet, and "the two" brought Atmosphere producer **Ant** along, to provide the musical bed for this fun filled funk ride.



I SELF DEVINE SELF DESTRUCTION - CD/2LP - 8/02/05

Micranots front-man, half of **Semi.Official** and one of the founding members of **The Dynospectrum** (Slug, Musab, I Self, Gene Poole), emcee I Self Devine returns with his most personal and engaging journey to date. Produced by **Jake One**, **Ant**, **Vitamin D & Bean One**.

IN STORES NOW



STILL TO COME

P.O.S. "AUDITION" - CD/2LP - 9/13/05

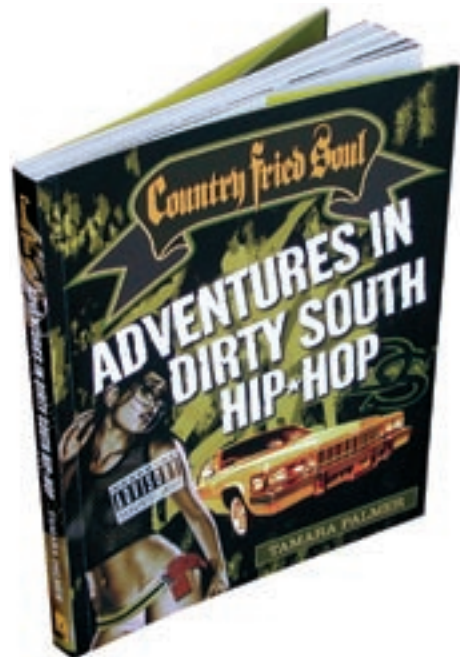
ATMOSPHERE "YOU CAN'T IMAGINE HOW MUCH FUN WE'RE HAVING" - CD/2LP - 10/04/05

ANT "MELODIES & MEMORIES V.2 ('85-'89)" - CD - 10/18/05

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CRUNK LIT

Conversations on the Deep South's hip-hop scene.

Throughout her "mixtape" of a book, Bay Area author/editor Tamara Palmer cuts back and forth between anecdotes of and from Dirty South legends and "newbies" alike. *Country Fried Soul—Adventures in Dirty South Hip Hop* (paperback, Backbeat Books, \$19.95) gives a glimpse into a day in the life of Dirty South stars like Uncle Luke, Jazze Pha, and Ludacris from the booty shake clubs to shaking the status quo. An entertaining, lightning quick read, *Country Fried Soul* illustrates how Dirty South artists have hustled and tussled with their ideals and image and battled for over a decade-and-a-half to gain respect and success on *Billboard's* charts. Palmer shared some of her own Dirty Dirty adventures with us. *Tony Ware*

What was your first exposure to the Dirty South sound?

I snuck a cassette copy of 2 Live Crew's *As Nasty As They Wanna Be* into my house when I was 16. I appreciated it in the same way that I liked Eddie Murphy's concert films: I liked the shock value.

What's the dirtiest Dirty South story revealed to you?

How Big Boi recovered an expensive ring that went missing in a room full of naked groupies—well, inside one of them actually.

Would you ever drink an entire can of Lil Jon's CRUNK!!! energy drink?

If I could be relieved of any responsibilities for a couple of days (because I'd be up for that long) and had enough herbal agents to counteract the effects; I'm a small woman and I think it has a bit too much horny goat weed in it for me.

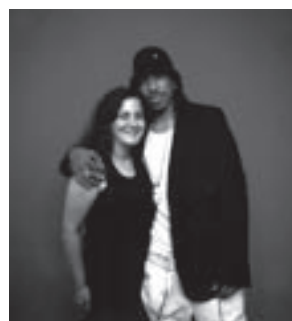
How many locations in Jermaine Dupri and Ludacris' "Welcome to Atlanta" did you visit?

I saw a lot of them by car. I didn't get to visit some of the places in the remix, though.

www.backbeatbooks.com



Author Tamara Palmer with the Ying Yang Twins (left) and Ludacris



Rob Swift of The X-ecutioners from *Scratch*

WILD STYLE WARRIORS

Scott Thill evaluates three hip-hop DVDs that expose the music's heart, soul, and balls.



Scratch: All the Way Live (Scratch Worldwide, \$17.98)

A smoking, hilarious concert DVD of the Scratch Tour's 2003 stand at Los Angeles' House of Blues, featuring mind-boggling turntablism from Jazzy Jay, X-ecutioners, Z-Trip, and Mix Master Mike.

Hip: Humor and skill. These guys are not only lightning-quick scratch legends, but are also some of the funniest motherfuckers you'll ever hear. Bonus feature on guerrilla street sign-poster Shepard Fairey.

Hype: Nada.

Verdict: A hip-hop DVD that'll expand your parameters.

www.scratchworldwide.com



Freestyle: The Art of Rhyme (Palm Pictures, \$19.98)

DJ Organic's culturally rich and insightful glimpse into the kinetic minds that spit rhyme without the benefit of pen or paper, featuring some of the most talented (and underrated) spontaneous poets of the game's past, present, and future.

Hip: Footage, dialogue, respect. *Freestyle* clears some space in hip-hop's pantheon for on-the-spot wordsmiths like Supernatural, Freestyle Fellowship, Divine Styler, J5, and many more.

Hype: Overhypeing the Supernatural/Craig G battles.

Verdict: A dazzling doc that legitimizes emcees as the true poets of the new millennium.

www.palmpictures.com



Inner City Streetball (Entertainment Unlimited, \$14.95)

A grassroots but nevertheless jumbled collection of pickup hoops highlights, and hip-hop performances and interviews with The Roots, RZA, Jay-Z, ODB, and more. Strictly low-budget with an eye on the big time.

Hip: Black Thought's freestyling, Jay-Z's always refreshing honesty, RZA dazzling's wordplay, and ODB's shoeless sermonizing.

Hype: Spends more time on lay-ups and off-the-face passes than on mind-blowing hoop sequences. I've seen better moves in Earl Boykin's worst games.

Verdict: Pick up the *Rucker Park* or *And1 Mix Tape* DVDs instead.

www.innercitystreetball.com

HOUSE OF WAX

Is *Maestro* just voguing to its own groove?

Described as a documentary about the development of dance culture from the late '60s through the early '80s, Josell Ramos' *Maestro: The Origins of Dance Music Culture* (Artution Productions, DVD, \$21.98) plays more like a bio piece on Larry Levan and the Paradise Garage. Important subjects, certainly, but the minimal attention given to other clubs (The Gallery, The Warehouse, and most notably David Mancuso's Loft) is a pity. That said, the documentary features amazing footage of dancers at the Garage and elsewhere, a shit-hot soundtrack, and interviews with both DJs and partygoers, the latter of whom describe their dancefloor experiences with a passion bordering on the rapturous. The historical footnotes are fascinating as well, and the importance of, as Mancuso puts it, "mixing the social classes together through dance" is both inarguable and inspirational. *Maestro* suffers from sloppy editing, imperfect sound, and a slightly skewed perspective; yet one still can't help but feel a sense of wonderment at the tiny New York dance scene that grew to become a global phenomenon. *Alex Posell*

www.maestro-documentary.com



The Paradise Garage and Nicky Siano with Larry Levan from the *Maestro* DVD



SPIN CYCLE

News and gossip from the music world

Get ready for the **Soul Summit** summer music series, Sundays through August 21 in Prospect Park in Brooklyn. **DJ Spinna** is the event's resident DJ with performances scheduled by Club Shelter singer KimBlee and up-and-coming future jazz live duo Keston & Westdal. Check www.whitelabelpressure.com for more. Plastik spastik **Richie Hawtin's** new album **DE9: Transitions**, featuring high-resolution audio and accompanying visuals, will be released on novamute/Minus Records in September as a CD & DVD, including both stereo and 5.1 surround sound versions. Videographer **Chris Cunningham's** (Madonna, Björk) next project for Warp Films is **Rubber Johnny**, an abstract short featuring music by electronic composer **Aphex Twin** shot entirely on DV in infrared. www.rubberjohnny.tv One-drop fans should check **Reggae For Humanity Vol. 1** on Manila Jeepney Records consisting of two riddims—Dark Skin Girls (based on the classic UK reggae hit "Black Skin Boy") featuring **Peter Hunnigale**, **Dona V**, and **Luciano** and Guide Us built by England's very own **Russ D & The Disciples Band**. www.liveandlovereaggae.com Detroit techno producer **Unsel Brown** (Brothers Records) shows you how vinyl records are made on his video "Vinyl Records" at www.acidplanet.com. **Beathut.com** is your spot for downloading the underground's best downtempo, broken beat, and nu-jazz from labels like **Grand Central**, **Bastard Jazz**, and **Catskills**. **The Breakin' Collection** (MGM Home Entertainment) drops on DVD August 16th featuring the classic pop-locking and breakdance films *Breakin*, *Breakin 2: Electric Boogaloo*, and *Beat Street*. Chicago's **Kahil El Zabar** and his Ethnic Heritage Ensemble release a two-disc set this month on Deeper Soul—one CD of original tracks and another with remixes from **Henrik Schwarz**, **IG Culture**, **Osunlade**, **Alton Miller**, and **Kemit Sources**. The next version of

Apple's iTunes and iPod software will support **podcasts**. According to a company statement, the new software will make organizing, categorizing and finding podcasts simpler. **Justo Faison**, founder of the **Mixtape Awards**, was killed in a car crash this May. He was 36. Faison, who founded the awards show in 1995, also held positions at Atlantic and Epic records during his career as a rap promoter. West London's **Loungin' Recordings** will keep this summer hot with new releases from **Trevor Loveys** ("Outside In" with remixes by **Sinbad**), **Max Fresh's** album *Lemon*, and Parisian jazz artist **Art Bleek's** LP *Between Yesterday and Tomorrow*. Tune in techno and electronic webcasts 24-7 on Barcelona, Spain's brilliant **Scannerfm.com**, which features continuous streams of contemporary electronic, crunchy beats, hip-hop, bizarre electro, IDM and proudly displays the banner "we don't play guitars!" Jamaican artists **Voice Mail** release their fourth music video, "Wacky Dip/Just Dance" (on Don Corleone's **Jonkanoo** riddim), which pays tribute to the late Gerald "Bogle" Levy. The concept of the video is a dance-off with two dance groups who do most of Bogle's dances. **Boca Barranca Beach Parties** (June through August 2005) in Marina Romea, Italy will feature broken headz like **Domu** (Saturday, September 24), **Seiji** (Saturday July 23), Patrick Forge, and **Orin Walters** (Bugz in the Attic) among other Goya Distribution associates. www.beatzonthebeach.com Tupac's godmother, **Assata Shakur**, has a \$1 million bounty on her head courtesy of Uncle Sam. She's lived in Cuba for nearly 30 years after escaping a maximum security prison. **Rain Recording** releases the first PC made especially for music producers. Their seriously stylish **Live Book** features all the in-and-out ports a producer could ever need (multiple FireWire, USB2, VGA, mic-in, headphones, etc) for a truly all-in-one tool. Have a look at www.rainrecording.com. **XLR8R** keeps you cool as ice cubes this summer with news and downloads at www.xlr8r.com.

1. Still from Chris Cunningham's *Rubber Johnny*; 2. Assata Shakur; 3. Henrik Schwarz; 4. Seiji; 5. Trevor Loveys; 6. Richie Hawtin; 7. Kahil El Zabar

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Indie? Mainstream? North Carolina's rap saviors Little Brother blow up the barriers.
WORDS: DANIEL SIWEK TITLE ILLUSTRATION: EVAQ PHOTOS: DUSTIN ROSS

It's 6 p.m. and Midtown is gridlocked with commuters trying to escape from New York. As office lights dim and commercial properties empty, the business of music doesn't cease, not at 1290 Avenue of the Americas. I'm in the Atlantic Records building about to meet up with North Carolina's hip-hop trio Little Brother. Back in the 1950s, before the building formerly known as the Sperry-Rand was erected, the block was lined with jazz hot spots and Rat Pack haunts like Toots Shors, where Marilyn Monroe sightings weren't uncommon and, over drinks, the Yanks and Sox owners actually swapped Joe DiMaggio and Ted Williams for a day.





Little Brother: Big Pooh, Phonte, and 9th Wonder

“Even if the shiny suit era of hip-hop came back, we’re not going to do it.”

–Big Pooh

What do sauced-up baseball owners and data-processing manufacturers have to do with Little Brother and the price of hip-hop in China? Well, like major league baseball, Atlantic Records is in the business of selling hits, and with their new recording contract, Little Brother can say goodbye to ABB Records because they’ve just been traded to the majors. And as for Sperry-Rand, well they made calculators, the kind Atlantic’s numbermen love and will have at the ready for the release of Little Brother’s second record, *Minstrel Show*, this fall.

Twenty-eight flights up, I’m escorted through the frosty glass doors and greeted by Big Doh, the group’s manager and *de facto* big brother. Not as menacing as Suge Knight, or even Led Zeppelin’s Peter Grant, you can still tell that behind the warm smile is a guy ready to do anything and everything for Little Brother. “This is Big Pooh,” he says introducing me to the baby-faced rapper, followed by his partner in rhyme Phonte and DJ/producer 9th Wonder. I’m compelled to find out what it’s like being on Atlantic’s legendary roster, with players that are the titans of black music from the Stax/Volt dudes to...Ray! “The day I met Ahmet Ertegun I didn’t know what to say,” Phonte admits. “It still amazes me that we’re a part of a label with such a rich history of black music.”

GAME TIGHT

Roaming the halls in search of an interview spot, the guys only stall to say goodnight to one of the more attractive female employees, but for the most part, even as we enter a bonafide boardroom, they’re talking about the meeting they just had. “Just a little parent-teacher conference,” 9th Wonder tells me with benign sarcasm. When I ask him who’s the parent and who’s the teacher, he scratches his head quizzically. “[The label is] used to babysitting artists,” he explains, “and they have a hard time when they see an artist that knows exactly what they want to do and where they want to

go.” Is there trouble in paradise already? “It’s no big deal,” reassures Pooh, “we just had to tell the label that we’re not worried about what the single is, and we’re not interested in following any trends. They bought us for us, and even if the shiny suit era of hip-hop came back [à la Mase] we’re not going to do it.” “I compare it to going out with a girl,” Phonte sets up. “You say, ‘You’re incredible baby, but if you would only lose, like, 20 pounds.’”

You may be thinking the boys waived their “integrity” rights when they signed the devil’s contract, but Phonte (or Tay, as he’s called) insists that the indie world isn’t any better. “Even indie labels have a problem with artists who’ve got their own agenda, and we took a look at the whole [DIY] thing, but we never really wanted to be champions of the underground anyway.” They fit the bill pretty well, though. They originally got signed after posting a demo they produced in their dorm room (Pooh gives a shout out to “308, NC State! North Hall!”) on ?uestlove’s Okayplayer.com; Bay area indie ABB loved it and issued it as LB’s debut. And when LB rapped, people took notice—*The Listening* was one of the most anticipated releases of 2003.

PROJECTS BLOWED

In free agent fashion, the boys made a separate four album deal with Colorado Rockies short stop (more baseball?) Desi Relaford’s Six Hole Records, which has released music from other members of their Justus League crew (L.E.G.A.C.Y., Away Team) as well as solo albums from Pooh and 9th Wonder (*Sleeper* and *Dream Merchant V.I.*, respectively). Pooh’s release showed off a strong solo voice, while 9th Wonder’s productions—which often fetishize Pete Rock’s take on soul—hold up no matter who spits on the track, a skill which led him to produce beats for *The Black Album* (after which Jay-Z recommended him to produce a track for Destiny’s Child).

Little Brother is prolific. Capable of dropping multiple projects at any time, you can see how they could be too

“Don’t put us in a box.
There’s no tellin’ what
we’ll do.”

—Phonte

much for any one label to handle. Phonte also has a side project (an internet collaboration) with Dutch producer Nicolay called Foreign Exchange (their *Connected* album was issued by BBE last year), while LB just released their “mixtape,” *Chillin’ Circuit 1.5*, on Fast Life/Koch. Some feel the artist mixtape is passé, but Phonte defends the collection of unreleased and side-tracks, calling it a “stopgap between releases.” “Just something to keep the fans at bay,” confirms Pooh. But let’s not underestimate the content of *CC 1.5*; deep within guest appearances by Kanye West and Big Daddy Kane lay some of the most urgent and concise lyrics Little Brother has to offer. The title alone refers to the frustration of playing “rinky-dink clubs,” says Phonte, and on “Yo Yo” he raps, “*I can’t fuck with no coffee houses...I’m about to kick some Trick Daddy!*” The tao of Big Pooh seems to be the perfect balance of “indie hustle and major muscle,” but it appears both camps ain’t getting it, and the lyrics show signs of resentment. “People were like, ‘They’re conscious,’ comparing us to Common,” Phonte laments. “I’m saying, don’t put us in a box. There’s no tellin’ what we’ll do...we can listen to crunk if we want!”

DIFFERENT STROKES

Little Brother isn’t too hard to figure out, according to Pooh. “If you actually listen to the words, you will know us before you meet us,” he reveals. “Writing is our therapy. We put so much of our lives on the record, some of us more than others.” “Yup,” Phonte confirms. “All my failed relationships, everything goes in.” Sibling rivalry isn’t one of their problems; they’ve already agreed that their audience benefits from any personal and stylistic differences they have. Pooh explains: “I bring the street side, not shooin’ niggas and selling drugs, but in the boom bap beat. Tay likes to do a lot of melodies and sometimes I’m like, ‘I’m tired of all that singing shit!’ But that’s just our differences as emcees.”

Pooh had another thorn in his side as well, for as close as he and Phonte are, it still hurt when people pitted the two against each other. “I heard people saying I wasn’t as good as Phonte,” says Pooh. “I always compared it to being Scottie Pippin playing with Michael Jordan. For a while Pippin ain’t get the credit he deserved, but that’s

because he was playing with the greatest mutha-fucka to ever play the game, so of course he’s gonna get overlooked.” Phonte insists that their yin and yang “makes for a better group,” because they’ve got a screamer and a whisperer (or singer). “I think with this record, they’ll appreciate Pooh for Pooh,” he suggests. “I was playing the record for one of my boys the other day and he said, ‘Yo this is y’all’s *Low End Theory*.’ That was the A Tribe Called Quest record where Phife got all his props, and my friend was like, ‘If niggas ain’t feelin’ Pooh after this? [They’re crazy.]’”

SOUND OF NOW

As a producer, 9th Wonder is in the catbird’s seat—he gets to stretch his computer wizardry (with layers of lost R&B) while capturing two word-smiths. “A lot of these artists coming out don’t have the chops to pull off a song without clichés, but we don’t have to worry about that,” he says proudly. “Only a few groups could pull off rhyming to my production on *Minstrel Show*, and they’re all from early ’90s.”

“It’s a natural maturity, man,” Pooh concludes. “We completed *The Listening* on March 13, 2002, and it’s muthafuckin’ June 2005, so of course we’ve advanced production-wise. We’ve been around the world, you know what I’m saying? So niggas been through a lot and we got a lot to talk about!”

Little Brother’s Minstrel Show is due out on Atlantic in September. *Chillin’ Circuit 1.5* is out now on Fast Life/Koch. www.atlantiarecords.com/littlebrother



STATE OF GRACE: These Wolfpack alumni rep Cacalac lovely.

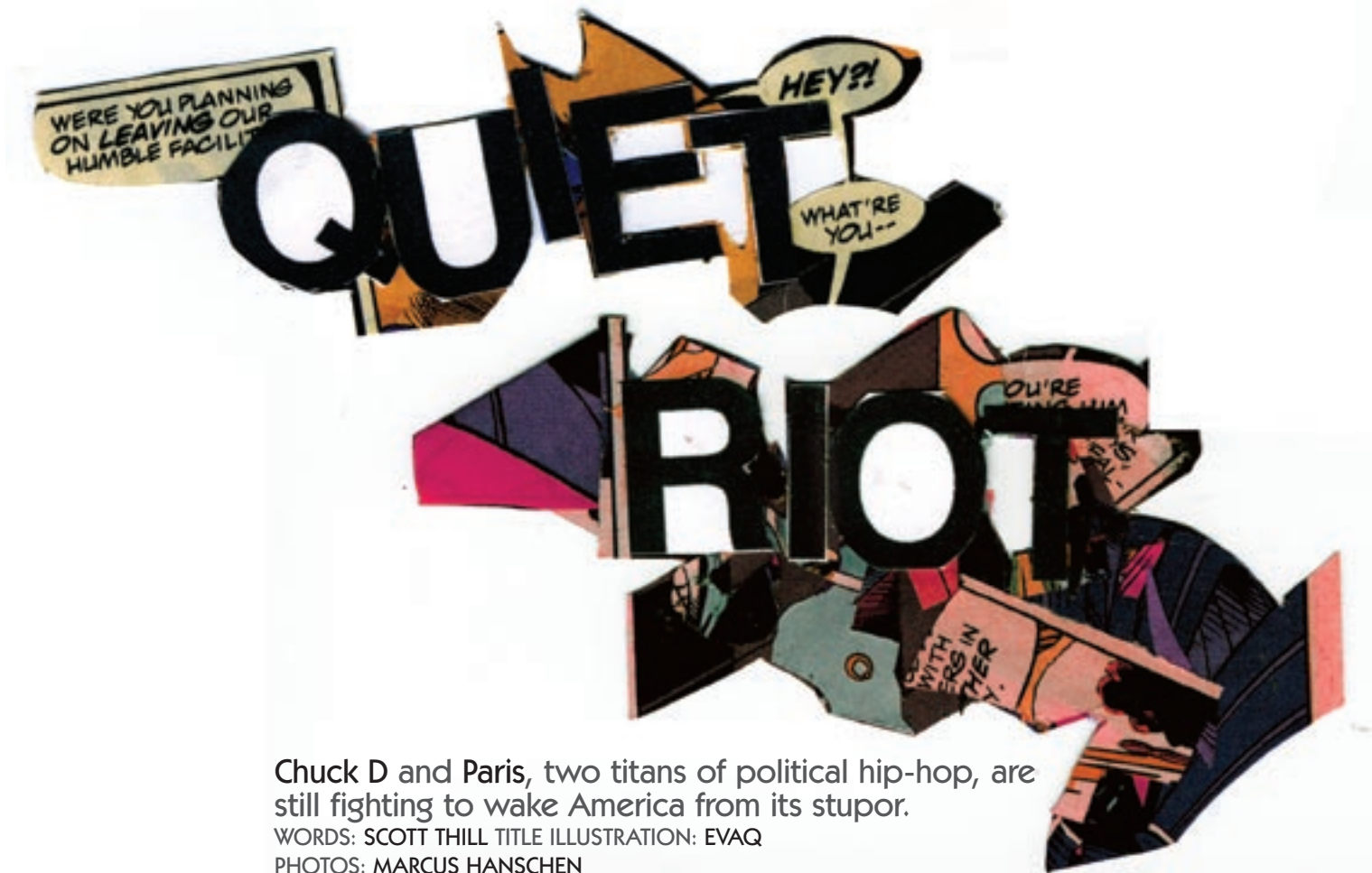
If you want to understand Little Brother then you should take a ride across I-40 to **Raleigh/Durham**, as **North Carolina** is practically another member of the act. “Our lyrics have small little hints that only a North Carolinian would know,” reveals Phonte. “Like in ‘Love Jones,’ I say ‘I’m playing for big stakes not some **Angus Barn**.’ Too bad I’m a vegetarian now,” he jokes, “but that’s the best steakhouse, and now that I can afford to eat there I can’t go!”

But don’t confuse NC State with the dirty dirty South. “We’re **below the Mason-Dixon Line**,” says Pooh, “but we’re not

really the South. We’ve got four **ACC schools** here so it’s a melting pot of north and south.” They’re not as booty-club oriented as their neighbors but, as 9th Wonder tells us, “we’ve got other things on our record.” They rap about **E House**, **Morrison**, and **Hinton James**, or as Phonte quips, “the **Holy Trinity**, emphasis on ‘ho.’” Phonte endorses the **Cats Cradle** and the **Local 506** as the hip-hop venues to check out. “You can always catch an open mic night or what not.”

The guys also spend a lot of time with their **Justus League** (a crew of about 18), not to be confused with their A&R/manage-

ment team Hall Of Justus; a few J-Leaguers belong to the Hall of Justus, including **L.E.G.A.C.Y.** (“a words man,” says Pooh) and the **The Away Team**, who are “a Gangstarr combination of a dope producer and MC.” But the LBs aren’t the only ones who can carry some weight in the state, as Phonte knows, namechecking “**21st Records**, **Redout Entertainment**, **Bloc Farm**, and the **Butta Team**,” and even **Petey Pablo**, whose “Blow Ya Whistle” is making some noise behind them. “I don’t really consider those cats as competition,” he says with confidence. “We’re all working to shine some light on our state, so **it’s all family, y’know.**”



Chuck D and Paris, two titans of political hip-hop, are still fighting to wake America from its stupor.
WORDS: SCOTT THILL TITLE ILLUSTRATION: EVAQ
PHOTOS: MARCUS HANSCHEN

It's legend now, but worth revisiting. If you were there when it happened—in the midst of a Reagan hangover and a Bush ascendancy—it's almost impossible to forget the massive aftershocks after Public Enemy dropped their canonical *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* in 1988. Along with De La Soul's expansive *3 Feet High and Rising* and Run-D.M.C.'s groundbreaking *Raising Hell*, the album helped create the so-called Golden Age of hip-hop—and from there the whole incendiary phenomenon got hotter than a house party on fire.



Only two years after the Long Island-bred PE's *Nations* inspired hungry minds to pick up picket signs and raise fists, Paris emerged from the other side of the nation—Northern Cali, to be exact—armed with what remains one of the most potent political releases in any musical genre, *The Devil Made Me Do It*.

“Public Enemy was responsible for my career taking the course that it took,” Paris explains. “I don’t know what my musical direction would have been had I not had their influence.” And so, by the epochal year of 1990, in which both *The Devil Made Me Do It* and Public Enemy’s *Fear of a Black Planet* made their auspicious debuts, the blueprint for passionate sonic activism was firmly laid down.

But somewhere along the way to the new millennium, to mangle Chinua Achebe, things fell apart. The Clinton ‘90s found America sleeping soundly next to a balanced budget and a few forays into social justice. The explosion of hip-hop attracted investors and sponsors like a street-level Super Bowl, and the whole gold-rush clusterfuck found rappers killing each other in adolescent, manufactured beefs. Paris had left the game entirely for a career in investment banking and Public Enemy’s Chuck D was asking gangstas black and white alike “But Can You Kill the Nigger in You?” on his underrated solo effort, *The Autobiography of Mistachuck*. Flava Flav, Public Enemy’s comic foil, began carousing with Stallone-leftover Brigitte Nielsen on bottom-of-the-barrel reality TV programs *The Surreal Life* and *Strange Love*. In short, something was definitely being televised, it just wasn’t the revolution.

THE ENEMY STRIKES BACK

But if 9/11 inspired Flava Flav to help dismantle the social legacy of Public Enemy by shacking up with a stable of banal C-listers, it had the oppo-

site effect on Paris and Chuck D, who both returned to hip-hop by steering away from the mainstream—and the crooked, bottom-line major labels—and back into the underground. Chuck D harnessed the power of the Internet to take Public Enemy’s message to people all over the world, while Paris returned from his financial career armed with the savvy to launch his own label, Guerilla Funk; he released the bracing post-9/11 rant *Sonic Jihad* before searching out Chuck for a long-awaited collaboration.

“I had always wanted to collaborate with Public Enemy,” Paris confides, “as far back as the early ‘90s. But we never got our ducks in a row. It was only after the events of September 11, the prominence of the Internet, and the respective development of our careers that we were able to come together. This time around I handled the writing and production, so in that regard, it’s a completely different situation for PE. Of course, working on the album was a trip for me. Doing the vocals in NYC was surreal at times, but it wasn’t [like the] *Surreal Life*.”

For his part, Chuck D is pleased with the long-anticipated collaboration. “This is a special project. My curiosity had always been piqued by the thought of someone coming from the outside of Public Enemy to write what they think a PE album should be. In this case, Paris was that guy. It’s totally his lyrics and music. He knows exactly how I think, so I think he’s the only person that could have done it. And the only one I would allow.”

BRINGING THE NOISE, AGAIN

The recording resulting from that highly anticipated meeting of the minds, *Rebirth of a Nation*, is a throwback to the hard-hitting political productions of the Golden Age, one

“You have people in America who don’t feel attached at all to the rest of the world.”

—Chuck D

that features not only PE and Paris’ patented soundscaping and gritty lyricism, but also cameos from artists like Immortal Technique, Dead Prez, Kam, and The Coup. Public Enemy is pretty much just Chuck D at this point—save some casual injections from Terminator X and a clowny appearance from Flavor Flav on “They Call Me Flavor” (sample lyric: “I’m in your mouth when you wake up in the morning/I’m the stink on your breath when you’re yawning”). Chuck’s voice sounds good and as didactic as ever on tracks like “Raw Sh*t” and “Hannibal Lecture,” but his messages sound more tame 10 years on, especially in the current ultra-violent climate of hip-hop.

Production-wise, Paris sticks to the Bomb Squad blueprint, punctuating Chuck’s rhymes with sounds of sirens, speeches, and turntables scratching; however, he smooths out Shocklee’s raw noise aesthetic, veering instead toward a West Coast gangsta sound full of thick bass, funk horns, and dramatic organs.

“I wanted to capture the elements that I love most about PE—raw energy, social commentary, and chaotic vision—and incorporate them into my production style, which is theatrical and extremely deliberate with regards to sonic quality,” says Paris. “My productions tend to be dark and aggressive. I suppose the main difference between this record and Public Enemy’s previous releases is that I avoid sampling. I dig pure, first generation sounds that are custom-tailored for effect. That way I’m not at the mercy of a given sample source. Every track fits a specific need, from the ‘Prophets of Rage’-like ‘Hard Rhymin’ to the ‘Fight The Power’-ish ‘Rise.’ And of course, the world-class guest appearances help bring it all full circle. As far as a line-up of like-minded, revolutionary artists with a hardcore edge goes, I really couldn’t ask for more. It’s all on the one.”

CONNECTING THE DOTS

But is everything old truly new again? Are the brothers ever going to work it out? Only if they change their narrow conception of citizenship, according to PE’s leader.

“I don’t look for miracles in records,” Chuck D explains. “They just reflect the reality of what we’re dealing with, and the reality of what black people are dealing with day-to-day in America is still discouraging. Which is why I encourage black people in the United States to become international thinkers, because the minute that blacks believe they have become Americans, they become limited by American characteristics. And the U.S. doesn’t view itself as an international country. The president himself made the United Nations obsolete, and you have people in America who don’t feel attached at all to the rest of the world.”

“I have an international perspective on hip-hop and I always have,” Chuck D argues. “And hip-hop in the U.S. has always been fragmented and heavily regionalized. It’s hard for one generation to listen to the other. And I don’t if that is different from other genres like rock or whatever, but what Paris brings to the table with his deep knowledge of funk and our people’s history is an ability to connect all the dots for everyone.”

“My entire approach to making records,” Paris explains, “especially in these last few years, has been to make the biggest sounding record possible. To me, what strikes me as being most effective is an ominous soundscape with a huge frequency range and the ability for the tracks alone to evoke emotion. The entire objective is to make good alternative entertainment, so that people aren’t bombarded with the same shit all day long.”

Public Enemy’s *Rebirth of A Nation* is out August 23 on Guerrilla.
www.publicenemy.com, www.guerrillafunk.com

THE CLOWN PRINCE

Prince Paul wants you to get his jokes.

WORDS: JESSE SERWER

TITLE ILLUSTRATION: EVAQ

PHOTOS: PETER AGOSTON

It's easy to rattle off Prince Paul's resume—boy wonder DJ for Stetsasonic, producer of the first three De La Soul albums, inventor of the hip-hop skit, sound bwoy for Chris Rock, one half of the category-killing Handsome Boy Modeling School. Where the Long Island native has truly come into his own is in the series of unique albums he's done under his own name: 1997's *Psychoanalysis*, 1999's *Prince Among Thieves*, 2003's *Politics of the Business*, and this year's *itsTRUmental*—all misunderstood treatises that show a restless but rich imagination. Despite a fruitful year that has seen the emergence of The Dix—an allegedly legendary but forgotten unit with doo-wop roots and an arsenal of dick jokes (actually a hilarious gag consisting of Prince Paul crew members like Mr. Len and Paul Barman)—Paul says he's giving up making albums of his own. In a series of recent conversations, Paul told *XLR8R* he might have better things in store.

Hey Paul. What are you doing right now?

Mostly kid stuff. I've been away so much this year so I have all these domestic things I have to do. I'm starting this Bernie Worrell project, making music with my man Newkirk. Me and Hank Shocklee are supposed to be doing a record together so we've been sitting around, just analyzing music. We are trying to create something totally different so it has to have a blueprint.

How did this project with [Parliament/Funkadelic keyboardist] Bernie Worrell come about? I know he's a hero of yours...

I met him in the early '90s and we talked for a bit. Last year I was asked to be in a documentary about

Bernie and I was re-introduced to him. His wife suggested we do a record together, and he was up for it. My man Newkirk is working on it with me, and I have a feeling if everything goes as we envision it, it should be a good album. There is a lot of trust, which makes it easy in one sense but difficult in another. There's a lot of pressure to create something good but it's good because I'll have to rise to the occasion.

Last time I talked to you, you told me *itsTRUmental* was going to be the last Prince Paul record. Is that still the case?

The next Prince Paul record I do will be the last. If I felt I was more relevant or necessary I would probably make more records. I might make a children's record, or another Dix record. The next year is going to be the beginning of a few eras for me, and the end of a few eras, and that is definitely one of them. I am going to start putting myself in the background more.

So what was the idea behind *itsTRUmental*? You got a lot of random things going on. I love that dance-hall song about donuts.

Peter Agoston, who runs *Female Fun*, asked me to do an instrumental album. It has beats from a couple different periods of my work. Some of it I did on the 808, one song is from a four-track, some of it is ADAT. It's kind of like an advanced instrumental album—there are some vocals where it fits. "The Boston Top," that's based on a true story of Newkirk buying a Boston cream donut where the icing came off like a magic shell in one piece. It was rather odd, so we made a song about it.



"I act upon the craziness of what I think."



Prince Paul with his *itsTRUmental* collaborators Mr. Dead, Maggie Horn, MC Paul Barman, Bimos, and Newkirk

“Hip-hop is not about wearing a bulletproof vest.”

What about something like the Dix record? How did you wind up connecting doo-wop, dick jokes and picking up women?

I don't know where these ideas come from. I guess just from being bored and silly. I haven't really grown up. People rarely act on the ideas that pop into their heads because they think it is stupid or farfetched or they don't want to put in the effort. I act upon the craziness of what I think. Each idea I come up with I wonder how many record labels I will get dropped from with it, and then I just go for it (laughs). If nobody else cares I made myself happy. Nothing I do is ever really intentional—even with (3rd Bass') "Gas Face," which was one of the only hits I have had, the drum programming was a mistake I kept. I'm the guy who, if I don't have to be anywhere at a specific time, I will just sit there and daydream. I drive my old lady crazy 'cause I'll daydream when she talks to me. I know how to amuse myself. I don't know if that's good or bad because it prevents me from making normal, accessible music that people like.

Talk about the cast of characters that turns up on your records. People who have been following your career since *Three Feet* might know Newkirk, and Mr. Dead was in *Metabolics*.

My crew of friends are like a comedy troupe but we use music. There are no black comedy troupes that are bizarre like that. That's basically who The Dix are. Mr. Dead—who is Peter O'Tool, the frontman for the Dix—is an untapped talent. You will see him in a lot of things that I do in the next few years. He is one of those guys that gets it. It is important to have people that work with you who, if you bring up an idea, they can expound upon it as opposed to saying it's stupid. With the right opportunity, he has the potential of being a superstar because he goes places where black people don't go. He goes to the limit on everything the way someone like Jim Carrey does.

Yeah, hip-hop has gotten so far away from the vibe you tap into that it seems like comedy might be the best venue for someone like you. But if you're offbeat in hip-hop your audience is limited to college-age white kids.

Musically there is only so far that I can go. More and more the creative and experimental doors of exposure are closing. You got the internet, but who hears that? There is so much crap to filter through and no promotion behind it. At least when I was on Tommy Boy and I made *Psychoanalysis*, Bambaataa played some of it on his *Zulu Nation* show. *Prince Among Thieves* got played on the major stations at night. Now you will never get played on the radio.

What would you do if you weren't making music?

I was known as a writer for a hot second. Nickelodeon approached me a while back after I was involved with the *Chris Rock Show* but then Viacom laid off the whole department. I am going to start writing again. Come up with something real stupid and see if anybody likes it.

Are you working on anything right now?

I developed a show to pitch to BET. Their writing is bad and the shows are horrible. I thought they needed something fresh so I put together a talk show like a black Conan O'Brien. After working with Chris Rock and Chappelle, I think I have an edge, though I'm not as funny as those guys. I don't think BET sees the brilliance. They want to piggyback on what everyone is doing but poorly. Have you seen *College Hill*? Oh my god. And I can't get a show? You got to be kidding! That's my life story, I don't stress it too much. People always point out the stuff I have done but I still don't feel like I have gotten that big break. Yeah I had a few records buzz up but I've never gotten to the point where I'm comfortable. I doubt I'll get to that point but, really, I'm not even close. Keeping it real doesn't concern me—what concerns me is that people freak out when they hear what I'm doing. I get criticized for that but I know hip-hop is not about wearing a bulletproof vest.

Prince Paul's *itsTRUmental* is out now on Female Fun Records. The Dix's *The Art of Picking Up Women/The Rise and Fall of the Dix EP/DVD* is out now on Smacks Records.

www.culturama.org/femalefun, www.dummysmacks.com

OUCH #6



FEATURING ARTWORK BY:

Andrew Guenther, Daniel Jackson, David Mashburn, Duke Riley, Elisa Jimenez, Joseph Ari Aloï, Katja O, Kenzo Minami, Marina Zurkow, Ro Starr and Scott Campbell



Pain is Inevitable Suffering is Optional



www.ouchthewebsite.com

XLR8R's 4th Annual

LABELS WE WE

The 25 Best Independent Labels

People want products that feel personal, and no one puts more blood, sweat, tears, and hard-earned pennies into their craft than small label owners, who have to be part parent, part curator (and sometimes part dictator) to get the job done. As a result, independent labels are awesome reflections of the people who run them and their aesthetics—a personal touch that should ensure they last long after the BMG/Universals of the world crash and burn. Tons of new labels have surged forth in the last few years, making it again hard to pick our favorite indies—we had to leave some out because we sing their praises on a monthly basis, and we didn't delve too deep into 12-inch-only imprints. After some agonizing, we whittled our list down to these 25 dependable outposts for good tunes—here are the labels we're rocking and jocking...and you should be too. *Vivian Host*



Todd Hyman, Carpark



Adam Pierce & Steph Salas, Fat Cat



Peter Adarkwah, BBE



Ralph Lawson, 20:20 Vision



Christina Reddington, Mike Locke, Tyler Moazed, Ana Calderon, Robbie Veitman, Steve Aoki, Luke Mulderink, & Adam Villacin, Dim Mak

20:20 Vision

Location: Leeds, England
Artists: Random Factor, Jesper Dählback, Dubble D, Inland Knights
Sound: Tweaky, bass-heavy house, pumping electro techno.
Best-seller: Fred Everything "Light of Day"
What's in a name: "Our name literally means 'perfect sight,' with each artist having free rein with their own view of the 20:20 Vision sound," says label manager Andy Whittaker.
Upcoming: Silver City's self-titled debut, with remixes coming from Ewan Pearson, Lindstrom, Phonogenic, and Boogie Corporation. www.2020recordings.com

BBE

Location: The Arsenal, London, England
Artists: Roy Ayers, Baby Blak, Jay Dee, The Foreign Exchange

Sound: True-school hip-hop, soulful house, and funk from the greats.
Best-seller: Jazzy Jeff *The Magnificent Funky Bunch*
Funny story: "It's always about Keb Darge," proclaims co-founder Peter Adarkwah, "and it involves fighting, swearing, paying silly amounts for records, and not making it to the bathroom on time—the life and times of a Scottish legend."
Upcoming: Albums by D'Neel and Alice Smith, a Radiohead tribute compilation, and *The Kings of House: Mixed by Masters At Work* on BBE/Rapster. www.bbemusic.com

Carpark

Location: New York, New York
Artists: Keith Fullerton Whitman, Animal Collective, Marumari, Signer
Sound: Electronic pop, post-punk reissues (on Acute), and modern psychedelia (on Paw Tracks).
Best-seller: Animal Collective *Here*

Comes The Indian (Paw Tracks)
Funny story: "I was recently with members of Ariel Pink, helping them buy some gear at a Manhattan music shop," says founder Todd Hyman. "After picking up a new amp and keyboard, the sales guy asked me if we were forming a band. I said, 'It seems like it, but they're actually playing at Tonic tonight.'"
Upcoming: A Greg Davis/Sebastien Roux collaboration, plus new albums from Casino Vs. Japan, Panda Bear, and Ariel Pink. www.carparkrecords.com

Dim Mak

Location: Hollywood, California
Artists: Pony Up!, Battles, Libretto
Sound: Like the best college radio station anywhere, from garage rock to electro-punk to hip-hop.
Best-seller: Bloc Party's *Silent Alarm*
What's in a name: "I started the label

when I was 18 and Bruce Lee was a major role model in my life growing up as an Asian in America," divulges founder Steve Aoki. "I wanted the label name to have some sort of mysterious connection with Lee, and some Chinese elders theorize that the *dim mak* (which means "death touch" in Chinese) is what ended up killing him."
Upcoming: A 12" from Mike Skinner's side project, Graffiti, and new albums from The Rakes, Icarus Line, From Monument to Masses, and Neon Blonde (Johnny and Mark from Blood Brothers). www.dimmak.com

Fat Cat

Location: Brighton, England and now Brooklyn, New York
Artists: To Rococo Rot, Black Dice, Mice Parade, Him
Sound: Where post-rock, leftfield folk, and esoteric electronics meet.

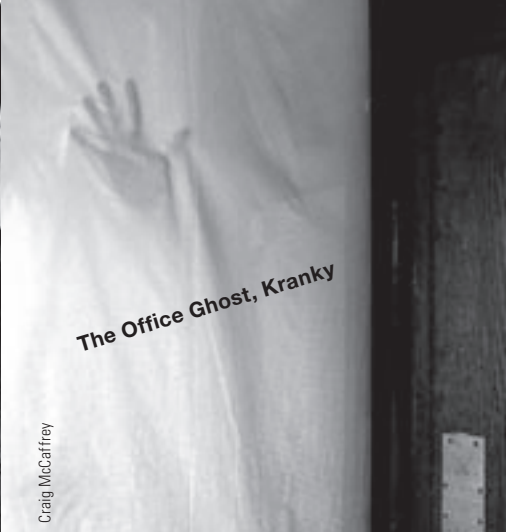


Valentina & Friends, Gomma

Jan Schünke



Palm Skin, Square One, Tom Roberts, Jamie Odell, Dave Taylor, & Trevor Loveys, Freerange



The Office Ghost, Kranky

Craig McCaffrey



Stuart Baker, Soul Jazz



Mike Paradinas, Planet Mu



Tony Morley, Leaf



Mathias Modica & Jonas Imbery, Gomma

Jan Schünke



Arno Kammermeier, Peter Hayo, Thomas Koch, Philip Jung, Walter Merziger, & Patrick Bodmer, Get Physical

Heiko Richard



Peter Agoston, Female Fun



Chris Cracknell, Greensleeves

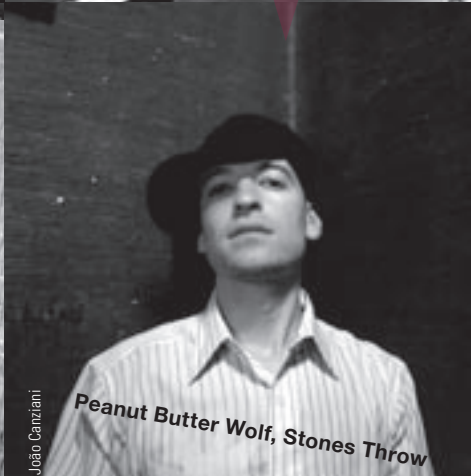


Alex Barck, Claas Brieler, & Juergen von Knoblauch, Sonar Kollektiv



Slug, Rhymesayers

Diamond Girl



Peanut Butter Wolf, Stones Throw

João Canziani

Best-seller: Múm *Finally We Are No One* in the US, Sigur Rós elsewhere.
Funny story: “I traveled in a row boat with the Múm kids through high seas when they were trying to land on the rocky shores of their lighthouse recording studio in Iceland. I was almost shitting my pants the whole time...” says label founder Dave Cawley.
Upcoming: Releases from The Mutts, Songs of Green Pheasant, Charlottefield, and a new Animal Collective album.
www.fat-cat.co.uk

Female Fun
Location: Deep in Bushwick, Brooklyn
Artists: Ge-o-logy, Dooley O, DJ Spinna, Prince Paul
Sound: Both traditional and uncharacteristically distinctive hip-hop.
Best-seller: Prince Paul *ItsTRUmental* and MF Doom *Special Herbs Vol. 1*
What’s in a name: It comes from the innocent and unadulterated affection towards women, and more importantly servicing their needs on a dancefloor and beyond.
Upcoming: New LPs by Sadat X and Shawn J. Period, and an EP from Spencer Doran.
www.femalefunmusic.com

Freerange
Location: East London, UK
Artists: Jimpster, Swell Session, Robert Strauss
Sound: Soulful disco, warm broken beat and jazz, and sometimes jackin’ house.
Best-seller: Switch *Get Ya Dub On*
Funny story: “At last year’s Freerange Christmas party, Trevor Loveys (our prized caner at the label) got so bleached that he eventually passed out and couldn’t be woken by any of us,” remembers artist/label owner Jamie Odell. “The club security had to call his girlfriend who trekked the whole way across town to come and take him home. She was very cross and tried to ground him!”
Upcoming: Robert Strauss *Quasars And Phasars* and singles from Audiomontage, Palm Skin Productions, Only Freak, Swell Session, and Marco Da Sousa.
www.freerangerecords.co.uk

Get Physical
Location: Berlin, Germany
Artists: Booka Shade, Chelonis R. Jones, M.A.N.D.Y.
Sound: Maximal electro/Italo/Chicago/disco house.
Best-seller: DJ T. “Freemind”

Funny story: “Once I was entering the club, the dancefloor was in the middle of the room, and there were 200 people around sitting, standing and waiting,” says artist and co-owner DJ T. “I was late, carrying my biggest case in front of me, hurrying over the empty dancefloor to the booth, not able to see the floor. There was a little platform in the middle of the dancefloor...and you can guess what’s next.”
Upcoming: Chelonis R. Jones *Dislocated Genius* album, a Booka Shade remix of The Juan Maclean, M.A.N.D.Y. remixes of Fischerspooner and Mylo, and a DJ T. remix of Mylo.
www.physical-music.com

Gomma
Location: Munich, Germany
Artists: Munk, Headman, Midnight Mike
Sound: German house culture and leftfield disco meets psychedelic rock, No Wave, and Italo.
Best-seller: Headman “It Rough” and Munk *Apertivo*
What’s in a name: “Gomma means ‘rubber’ in Italian and ‘to be totally stoned’ in Colombian,” says label owner Mathias Modica. “Everybody was using very German-sounding words when we

started the label and we didn’t want to have a cliché German name too.”
Upcoming: The re-release of Leroy Hanghofer’s *White Trash*, and new 12”s from Tomboy and WhoMadeWho.
www.gomma.de

Greensleeves
Location: London, England
Artists: Ward 21, Elephant Man, Red Rat, Steven “Lenky” Marsden
Sound: Hot and heavy dancehall, reggae, and riddims.
Best-seller: Shaggy “Oh Carolina” and Mr. Vegas’ *Heads High* album.
What’s in a name: “We originally planned to open a chain of record stores and ‘Greensleeves’ is the title of one of the first known English folk songs,” explains co-founder Chris Cracknell.
Upcoming: New albums from Vybz Kartel, Sizzla, and Macka Diamond, plus the *Biggest Ragga Dancehall Anthems 2005* double disc.
www.greensleeves.net

Kranky
Location: Chicago, Illinois
Artists: Out Hud, Pan-American, Stars of the Lid, Labradford
Sound: Out-rock, neo-surrealist head music.

Best-seller: We’re not telling.
Funny story: “When we worked together at Cargo Distributors, one of our co-workers pranked co-founder Joel [Loeschke] by writing ‘Honk if You Hate People, Too’ on the back of Joel’s dusty car,” says co-founder Bruce Adams. “That admonition has become a series of label bumper stickers and people sell them on eBay.”
Upcoming: New full-lengths from Boduf Songs, Lichens, Brian McBride, Windy and Carl, and Out Hud’s “It’s For You” single.
www.kranky.net

Leaf
Location: Brixton, London
Artists: Colleen, Triosk, Murcof, Clue to Kalo
Sound: Lush, textural electronic pop enveloping rock, folk, and free jazz influences.
Best-seller: Manitoba *Up In Flames*
What’s in a name: “I wanted something organic and tactile,” says founder Tony Morley. “A friend came up with it in the queue for a takeaway.”
Upcoming: Murcof’s second album, *Born Again* (a double-disc collection of Sutekh remixes), a 10-year label comp, and a Caribou DVD.
www.theleaflabel.com

Planet Mu
Location: Worcester, England
Artists: Venetian Snares, Exile, Virus Syndicate, Bizzy B
Sound: Techno, dubstep, jungle, grime, breakcore, and noise.
Best-seller: μ -ZIQ’s *Bilious Paths*
What’s in a name: “Planet Mu is the name of my old recording studio in London,” says owner Mike Paradinas.
Upcoming: New albums from Frog Pocket, Kyler, and Jega plus a DVD, *The Sacred Symbols of Mu*.
www.planet-mu.com

Rhymesayers
Location: Minneapolis, Minnesota
Artists: Blueprint, Eyedea & Abilities, Grayskul, Brother Ali
Sound: Pure hip-hop.
Best-seller: Atmosphere *Seven’s Travels*
What’s in a name: “We came up with it in ’92, ’93,” says Siddiq, who started the label with Ant, Slug, and Musab. “It’s a play on one of the founders’ last names, which is Sayers.”
Upcoming: Murs and Slug’s *Felt Two* (a tribute to Lisa Bonet), a new Atmosphere record (*You Can’t Imagine How Much Fun We’re Having*), and LPs from P.O.S. and I Self Divine.
www.rhymesayers.com

Sonar Kollektiv
Location: Berlin, Germany
Artists: Umod, Sirius Mo, Dixon, Micatone
Sound: Full spectrum club music for the aging b-boy.
Best-seller: Jazzanova *...mixing*
Funny story: “Our freshest signing is also our oldest artist: a gospel keyboardist from Washington,” explains Alex Barck.
Upcoming: A Jazzanova compilation called *Secret Love: A View on Folk*, the Kyoto Jazz Massive 10th anniversary record, and new albums by Slope and Wahoo.
www.sonarkollektiv.de

Soul Jazz
Location: London, England
Artists: A Certain Ratio, Hu Vibrational, Arthur Russell, Jackie Mittoo
Sound: Reggae, funk, hip-hop, house, and punk reissues, many of obscure micro-genres.
Best-seller: *New Orleans Funk* and Studio One *Rockers*.
What’s in a name: “Initially we started off selling second hand soul, jazz, funk, and rare groove in the ‘80s and it kinda stuck!” offers owner Stuart Baker.
Upcoming: Electronic compilation

Microsolutions, *Tropicalia* (a collection of ‘60s Brazilian psychedelia) and loads more Studio One reggae stuff.
www.souljazzrecords.co.uk

Stones Throw
Location: Highland Park area of Los Angeles, California
Artists: Madlib, J Dilla, Wildchild, MF Doom
Sound: Primarily hip-hop, but we release some jazz (from free to soul), new wave, broken beat, soul, and funk.
Best-seller: Madvillain’s *Madvillainy*
Funny story: “Before meeting Madlib in 1999 I heard stories about how prolific he was but I assumed it was hyperbole,” says co-founder Jeff Jank. “One night after coming home from a club, Madlib says, ‘I’m staying up tonight to make an album.’ Chris (Peanut Butter Wolf) and I laughed because we were both dead tired. Next morning, I woke up at 8 a.m. to the muted sounds of drums coming from the bomb shelter studio. Madlib had been at work all night recording and multi-tracking an album. He decided it was finished when the 72-minute CD was full.”
Upcoming: Koushik’s “Be With” EP, new records from Sound Directions and Percee P, and Madvillain.
www.stonesthrow.com



Corey Rusk, Touch & Go



Miguel Depedro, Tigerbeat6



Maria Gonima, Tigerbeat6



Eric Crandell, Andrew Jervis (in photo), Aaron Michelson, Jody McFadin, Michael McFadin, Jamie Strong, & Luis Vasquez, Ubiquity



Vince & Pat, VP Records



Bettina Richards, Thrill Jockey



Jeremy deVine, Temporary Residence



Peter Gordon, Thirsty Ear



Simon Halliday & Stephen Christian, Warp

Temporary Residence

Location: Brooklyn, New York
Artists: Mono, Eluvium, Howard Hello
Sound: Intense, instrumental.
Best-seller: Explosions In The Sky *The Earth Is Not a Cold Dead Place*
Funny story: "This guy calmly and politely walked up to Matthew Cooper (Eluvium) to ask him for a light," recounts label head Jeremy Atkins. "The guy's hand and arm were bleeding profusely, so Matthew let him keep the lighter. A few minutes later a half dozen cops swarmed around us with guns drawn—turns out the guy had just stabbed an elderly woman, then killed a cop with his own gun, then asked Matthew for a light. I guess that's not really a funny story."
Upcoming: New albums from Sleeping People, Bellini, and Explosions in the Sky, plus four limited edition Nice Nice CDs.
www.temporaryresidence.com

Thirsty Ear

Location: Norwalk, Connecticut
Artists: DJ Spooky, Meat Beat Manifesto, El-P, DJ Logic
Sound: Melding well-known improvisational jazz players with hip-hop and

electronic artists.

Best-seller: DJ Spooky *Optometry*
Funny story: "While recording Spring Heel Jack's first Blue Series release, *Masses*, John Coxon was trying to explain to an ensemble of some of NYC's finest free jazz musicians where the 'one' was in the beat," recalls proprietor David Aaron. "The concept of conducting free jazz players is an oxymoron in and of itself."
Upcoming: New albums from Charlie Hunter & Bobby Previte, John Medeski & Matthew Shipp, and Beans (with William Parker and Hamid Drake).
www.thirstyear.com

Thrill Jockey

Location: Chicago, Illinois
Artists: Tortoise, Mouse on Mars, Califone, Sam Prekop
Sound: Unpredictable, encompassing indie and post-rock, improv jazz, electronic boundary-pushers, and even hip-hop and bluegrass.
Best-seller: I'm sure you can guess... but we are most proud of our Jimmy Martin record.
Funny story: "When I first started in New York, I used a really cheap printer on 43rd Street," says founder Bettina Richards. "They

were always *really* friendly when I called, excessively so. They always used the word thrill-like 'Hey thrill, baby,' 'How's your day, thriller?'... and so on. One day I finally went over to the printers and found out why. They printed porno boxes and wanted to know what kind of porn we made."
Upcoming: New Adult. and Tom Verlaine records, Tortoise rarities, and a series of books of artwork with music (the first will be from Aki Tsuoko).
www.thrilljockey.com

Tigerbeat 6

Location: Oakland, California
Artists: Soft Pink Truth, DJ/Rupture, The Bug, Knifehandchop
Sound: The intersection of computer music and punk rock: hard, soft, nasty, or nice.
Best-seller: Kid 606 *Who Still Kill Sound*
What's in a name: "We were still teenagers when we started the label," shares Miguel "Kid 606" Depedro, "and thought it would be funny for us to adopt the name of an old teeny-bop magazine we thought wasn't around anymore—it turns out it was, so that's why we threw the 6 on."

Upcoming: New stuff from Quintron and Miss Pussycat, Christian Vogel, Boy from Brazil, and Phon.o.
www.tigerbeat6.com

Touch & Go

Location: Chicago, IL
Artists: Caexico, !!!, Slint, Blonde Redhead, Supersystem, TV On The Radio
Sound: Punk rock to chamber music to dance rock.
Best-seller: Big Black *Songs About Fucking*
Funny story: "At our CMJ showcase in 2002, the members of !!! took the stage dressed as human disco balls," remembers owner Corey Rusk. "Initially, anyone not familiar with them was pretty freaked out, but by the time Nic scaled some speakers 20 feet above the crowd and started performing what looked like an update on the Humpty Dance, the whole room was into it. On the down side, since the costumes were made by gluing hundreds of pieces of broken mirrors to thin, black, stretchy, nylon clothing, most of the band was bleeding throughout the show."
Upcoming: New albums from CocoRosie, The EX, and Dirty Three.
www.tgrec.com

Ubiquity

Location: Costa Mesa, California
Artists: Quantic Soul Orchestra, Beatless, Jeremy Ellis, Nostalgia 77
Sound: Organic, funky sounds from the realms of broken beat, house, Afro-Cuban music, and hip-hop.
Best-seller: Greyboy, but SA-RA, PPP, and Breakestra are nipping at his heels.
What's in a name: "We got our start releasing hard to find soul and funk tunes and trying to make those records and the artists who originally recorded them ubiquitous," says A&R man Andrew Jervis.
Upcoming: New albums from Ohmega Watts, John Arnold, Breakestra, SA-RA, and Greyboy, compilations with HVWS and Gilles Peterson, and the second volume of *Bay Area Funk*.
www.ubiquityrecords.com

VP Records

Location: Jamaica, New York
Artists: Capleton, Lady Saw, Wayne Wonder, Tanya Stephens, T.O.K.
Sound: Dancehall, reggae, and soca burners.
Best-seller: Sean Paul *Dutty Rock*
Funny story: Promotions don Chris Schlarb writes, "We have a kitchen

where Shirley, one of our employees, cooks up curry goat and steam fish that stinks up the whole building. Smells bad, but tastes great!"
Upcoming: New albums from Elephant Man, I-Wayne, Assassin, Warrior King, and Sizzla.
www.vprecords.com

Warp

Location: London, England and New York, New York
Artists: Autechre, Squarepusher, Two Lone Swordsman, Maximo Park
Sound: Twisted IDM, pastoral laptop sounds, spliffed downtempo, leftfield hip-hop, and guitar bands.
Best-seller: Aphex Twin's *Windowlicker*
Funny story: "Statistically, Warp artists are the most unprolific in the world," says US label manager Simon Halliday. "Aphex Twin: four years since *Drukqs*. LFO: three albums in 15 years. Boards of Canada: two albums in eight years. Jamie Lidell took five years to deliver *Multiply*. The Olympics are more frequent."
Upcoming: New albums from Broadcast, Jackson, and Boards of Canada.
www.warprecords.com

RUNNERS UP

- 4Lux** The dons of nu-jazz and broken beat queue up to record for this Amsterdam hotshot. www.4lux.com
- Audio Dregs** Portland, Oregon's homestead for bucolic, acoustic/electric micro-pop. www.audiodregs.com
- Beat Service** Showing off groundbreaking Norwegian talent (Lindstrom's kinky disco, Future Prophecies' intense d&b). www.beatservice.no
- City Centre Offices** Intimate IDM and highly detailed ambient from Ulrich Schnauss, I Am Not A Gun, and The Remote Viewer www.city-centre-offices.de
- Eskimo** Dark New Wave and dirty techno hand-picked by The Glimmers. www.eskimorecordings.com
- Fatbeats** No-nonsense classic rap from NY's well-respected hip-hop one-stop. www.fatbeats.com
- ~scape** Laptop futurists like Pole, Deadbeat, and Burnt Friedman purveying boom and bass. www.scape-music.de
- Soma** This Scottish stalwart keeps pumping out the hits, from slamming techno and minimal electro to searing tech-house. www.somarecords.com
- Violence** Sinister, otherworldly drum & bass that places a premium on clever beat programming. www.violencerecordings.com
- Tru Thoughts** Organic house, quirky downtempo, jazz breaks, and new school funk. www.truthoughts.com

LUKE VIBERT ON ACID



Cornwall's bleep captain speaks out about his not-so-surreptitious love affair.

WORDS: ROB GEARY

ILLUSTRATION: TROPHY

Luke Vibert is a hard man to pin down, leaping from style to style, pseudonym to pseudonym, and label to label for well over a decade. Some of his aliases have been associated with the freshest electronic sounds—from Wagon Christ's hilarious, sample-heavy hip-hop to epic drum & bass as Plug. But as of late, Vibert's been on a serious nostalgia trip—first with his faux-classic disco project Kerrier District and now with a series of releases based on a style once thought dead as a doornail in dance circles: acid.

Following 2003's bleep heavy *Joseph* (Warp), Vibert's latest album, *Lover's Acid*, on Planet Mu Records, is spiked with classic berserker 303 melody lines cut with rubbery basslines. Like many of Vibert's releases, it's an assemblage of his "basement tapes," with some cuts dating as far back as the mid-1990s. Via email from his home base in Cornwall, England, he recalls: "I only got my 303 in 1996 so I really started banging acid trax out then, although the labels I was on at the time didn't care for that stuff much—they thought it was

old and cheesy. Philistines! I think my original influences were acid house, though me and my friend Jeremy (Simmonds, with whom Vibert made *Weirs* in 1994) tried to make acid with other keyboards (SH101 and SX1000)."

Although he now has the gear to make classic acid tunes, don't expect stone-faced museum pieces. Vibert dislocates us in time by throwing in classic hip-hop samples and flipped and distorted sleazy-listening snippets alongside the retro-futurist sounds that first grabbed him over 15 years ago. "My friend Andrew Chick played me a tape in early 1989," he says. "I thought it sounded more like elastic bands than music at first, but I became hooked after a while. I think 'Personal Problem' by MDIII was one of the first to take my head off. I just think it's a beautiful ugly sound!"

Like his contemporaries and neighbors Aphex Twin and Squarepusher, Vibert records compulsively, banging together tracks at a pace that keeps his numerous labels scrambling. It becomes easier for Vibert to jump between styles rather than work

for marathon stretches on one genre. "I 'spose I go through phases, so I'll forget about acid for a while then remember and excitedly make a new load," he divulges. "I usually start with the 303 line itself, as that is the most important." Even though he moved from an ancient Atari set-up to a modern computer recording setup a few years back, those 303 lines are all generated by original hardware: "I don't have any software copies, as I prefer the original 303. The way the accent and slide functions work is the key, really, and the thing people seem to have most difficulty ripping off. I also really enjoy using analog gear...it doesn't give you such a headache as a computer and is more fun and musical-feeling."

The squealing, shrieking 303 line has sporadically threatened to reconquer dance music for years, from Timbaland sneaking it into the hip-hop charts to Out Hud converting indie-dance into modernized acid house, but the occasional talk of a full-on resurgence doesn't mean much to Vibert. "People have been asking me for nearly 10 years what I think of the impending acid revival, and I'll believe

it when I see it. I don't think most people even know what the original black Chicago acid house music sounded like..."

With Vibert dropping several discs worth of original acid and his Cornish mate Aphex Twin currently punching out *Analord 12*'s at a manic pace, it seems a mini-revival is on, at least for now. As it turns out, Richard D. James' newest moniker is a contentious one, because *Lover's Acid* contains a 303 stomper also called "Analord." "He ripped me off!" shrieks Vibert. "That was one of the very first tracks I did with the 303, nearly 10 years ago! Not sure if he'd forgotten, or more likely convinced himself it was his idea in the first place. I must say though, it's some of my favorite stuff that he's ever done."

Luke Vibert's *Lover's Acid* is out now on Planet Mu.

www.planet-mu.com, www.warprecords.com

LUKE'S TOP ACID TRAX

We asked Mr. Vibert for his five favorite 303 blasts. He broke the scales and came through with six all-time winners.

- 1. PHUTURE "ACID TRACKS":** "The first and possibly the best, depending on what mood you're in."
- 2. ARMANDO "CONFUSION'S REVENGE":** "Incredible 303 line, top drums, and evil lyrics!"
- 3. FAST EDDIE "KEEP ON DANCING":** "So, so funky, with a very high-pitched 303 riff!"
- 4. TWO OF A KIND "ACID BITCH":** "Liddell Townsell with the chunkiest riff around!"
- 5. TYREE "IT TAKES A THIEF (ACID MIX)":** "Meaty 303 and a DX bassline! Watch yer bassbins."
- 6. JAQUARIUS "DUB IS HAPPINESS":** "World's most evil 303 lines!"



HEAD CASE

Swiss producer Robi Insinna gets down with split personality disorder as Headman and Manhead.

WORDS: VIVIAN HOST PHOTO: DIETER SEEGER

Birth, School, Work, Death,” which debuted in 2004 as a 12-inch on British label Output Recordings, is arguably 32-year-old Swiss producer Robi Insinna’s best-known original track. Released under his Manhead alias, it’s a *nouvelle* disco space jam for the terminally depressed, featuring staccato guitar thrums, starlight lasers, live funk bass, and cynical vocals by Christian Kreuz, who sounds like a goth on Zoloft.

In actuality, “B.S.W.D.” is a remake of a 1988 song by British dirge rockers The Godfathers, and the song’s series of pessimistic koans (“*I don’t need your sympathy/There’s nothing in this world for me*”) were originally intended as a response to conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s 1987 re-election. So not only is Insinna’s version a gorgeously twinkling fusion of rock elements with Italo influences, but its perverse mix of the uplifting and gloomy is a perfect fit for the prevailing mood of these increasingly conservative times.

Insinna’s choice of cover songs points at the looming influence British music has had on him. Although he’s spent most of his life in Zurich, Switzerland, he has been obsessed with the specter of England since the age of 16, when his older friends took him to London for the first time. He fantasized about seeing The Jam’s Paul Weller walking by in a suit and being on the floor of Manchester’s Hacienda club as A Certain Ratio and New Order played. And at his first DJ gigs in the early ‘90s—psychedelic underground parties his friends did in forest caves and rented halls—he played a ton of Happy Mondays and Stone Roses alongside electro and New Wave numbers.

These days, Insinna’s dancefloor-detonating DJ sets (best exemplified by his *Dance Modern* compilation for Eskimo) are slightly more straightforward, clearing a path through a thicket of electro-house, acid, punk funk, and techno hip-hop jams. But you can still hear echoes of British music past (particularly rock) in his production work as Headman and Manhead, two aliases which represent different sides of his musical personality.

Headman is perhaps the better known of the two; since releasing the eclectic *It Rough* album on Gomma in 2001, he’s been called upon to render tracks like Radio 4’s “Party Crashers,” Mylo’s “Destroy Rock & Roll,” and Franz Ferdinand’s “Dark of The Matinée” ready for club floors. Headman—whose new album, featuring vocals from Erol Alkan, Ben from Fat Truckers, and Matt from The Rapture, will be out in October—strives for a quasi-live feel as it amalgamates influences from

punk, funk, and disco of the late ‘70s and early ‘80s. “Headman has this more organic sound,” concurs Insinna. “I use a lot of live bass and I sort of think of it like an imaginary band.”

Manhead—less the inverse of Headman than his rave-ready cousin—represents Insinna’s more studio-oriented, less rock-driven side. “[It’s] a little more electronic and disco-oriented, with more synthetic sounds and drum machines,” says Insinna, who’s fond of using the adjectives “Balearic and cosmic” to explain the sinuous sax-y funk of “Doop” and the shimmering proto-house of “Hey Now.” (Both songs can be found on his self-titled Manhead LP, released on Fine in March 2005.)

Though he’s already got two aliases, Insinna is in search of more outlets for his creativity. Like friends and contemporaries Munk, The DFA, and Tiga, he’s got his own label, Relish Records. Though it was started in 2001, he’s ramping up the releases with output from Italian retro-discoids Franz & Shape and a Dutch band that goes by the confounding name David Gilmour Girls. Insinna does artwork for many of his own CDs—mostly bold, brightly colored faces that recall ‘70s art punk record sleeves and the line work of Keith Haring. And he’s forever mixing and remixing: new versions of tracks by DJ T, Röyksopp, and Anubian Lights will be out soon, and he’s compiling the next Bugged Out mix.

“It’s getting nearly impossible to put any old stuff [on compilations] anymore—it’s harder to discover things,” grouses Insinna. But just because he included leftfield picks like Lene Lovich and New Fast Automatic Daffodils on *Dance Modern*, don’t peg him as a snob for obscurity. To the contrary: “I knew Mylo’s ‘Drop The Pressure’ was going to be big, but I had to include it because it was so much a part of what I was playing at the time. I don’t want the music I play to be too underground or too cool for everyone. It’s ridiculous when someone doesn’t play a track just because it gets too big—this is the elitist [attitude] from the ‘90s that I hate.”

Manhead’s self-titled album is out now on Fine. Headman’s new album will be out in October on Gomma. www.relishrecords.com, www.finerec.co.uk, www.gomma.de

TRACK CITY

“You have complete control. Every inch your foot moves on the pedal is every inch your bike moves. There’s no coasting, there’s no hitting the front brakes—there’s just you and your bike.” —Brad Baker, Trackstar NYC

PHOTOS: CHRISTOPHER GLANCY (BROOKLYN), DAVID NAKAMOTO (PORTLAND), MAY TRUONG (MONTREAL), CHRISTOPHER WOODCOCK (SAN FRANCISCO)
CONCEPT & CASTING: BRIANNA POPE

BUSHWICK, BROOKLYN

ARONE 25, wrench (mechanic). **Bike:** What’s white and blue and quick all over? **Heavy Rotation:** The Haunted *Somethin’ Rather*. **CHARLOTTE** 17, bike messenger. **Bike:** It’s the bike version of me. It’s got a Motto Spynergy front wheel and Pikachu is its mascot. **Heavy Rotation:** Iron Maiden *Live After Death*. **SHAWN LOWERY** 29, biker. **Bike:** It’s a 2004 (K HS). It comes in yellow and black. I took the stickers off and put my own on (NYC taxi-style) with white tape on the black forks. **Heavy Rotation:** Death Cab For Cutie. **BRAD BAKER** 25, bike shop owner; **Bike:** Vintage Tommasini. **Heavy Rotation:** Guns Fire Mayhem, self-titled. **PETE CORRIE** 24, arceest. **Bike:** Area 51 (from outer space) with Mark Gonzalez’s old saddle. **Heavy Rotation:** Cuddle Machines! **ZACH BLACKBURN** 24, head mechanic and messenger at Trackstar. **Bike:** My Merckx? It’s got

the smoothest Campy bottom bracket I’ve ever worked on. **Heavy Rotation:** Whatever metal I can find in the shop CD pile. **PATTY BOWMAN** 24, bike shop owner. **Bike:** Huffy commissioned Serotta to make their team frame for the Olympics in the ‘80s and that’s what I got (so I hear). **Heavy Rotation:** Godspeed You Black Emperor and Prince. **JOHNNY COAST** 30, frame builder. **Bike:** A custom Hetchins copy (Hetchins was a European company whose signature was curly chain stays and seat stays). **Heavy Rotation:** Loretta Lynn’s latest. **BREAN** 35, messenger. **Bike:** Piece of shit Fuji track frame, Mavic front wheel, eggbeater pedals, Miche Primmo cranks, stripped road saddle. **Heavy Rotation:** Nothing. **CEYA**, unemployed. **Bike:** Gianni Motta Personal 2001 track bike made in 1985 with stars ‘n’ stripes. **Heavy Rotation:** I’m not listening to music. **PHILIP JOSOLOWITZ** 22, something to do with logistics and bike riding. **Bike:** I love it, but it’s dying. I’ve put it through a hell of a lot. **Heavy Rotation:** RJD2 *Since We Last Spoke*.



ALAMO SQUARE PARK, SAN FRANCISCO:

KI HONG 33, sales engineer. **Bike:** Landshark custom made from Italian Dedacci steel, Campagnolo Record C track cranks. **Heavy Rotation:** *Music Is a Virus* by Air Liquide.
CHRIS BISHOP 34, video mixer. **Bike:** Late '70s Ital Vega handmade from Columbus steel, Nitto steel bars. **Heavy Rotation:** Godflesh and Clutch. **CECELIA ALTAMIRANO** 34, tattooist. **Bike:** It's a pimp ass ride. **Heavy Rotation:** Tom Vek and Sluts of Trust. **MARK ALTAMIRANO** 52, bowling alley mechanic. **Bike:** Built for me to race on in the early '80s. It's a Legacy TSX Columbus with Zipp wheels. **Heavy Rotation:** *No Wow* by The Kills.



PIER 2 AT THE EMBARCADERO, SAN FRANCISCO:

DAVID LIEBERMAN 28, bike messenger. **Bike:** Stolen. **Heavy Rotation:** Pig Destroyer. **DIRT** 26, retail. **Bike:** It's a track bike. **Heavy Rotation:** The new Spoon record.
MAURICE LEE (AKA EVIL KNIEGRO) 28, retail. **Bike:** It's not a Bianchi. **Heavy Rotation:** Lord Quas. **SARAH FOSTER** 28, bartender. **Bike:** Out of commission. **Heavy Rotation:** G.I.S.M, always G.I.S.M.



ALBERTA PARK, PORTLAND:

TAD BAMFORD a.k.a. **THUD** 28, bike messenger. **Bike:** It's red and shiny and I ride it on the track. **Heavy Rotation:** In general, the music I listen to is kinda hesh.
ISRAEL LUND 24, bike messenger. **Bike:** Track bike with no fenders, pretty standard. **Heavy Rotation:** Japanther and As the Sun Sets. **DAWN RIDDLE** 23, bike messenger/sign language interpreter. **Bike:** I really like this bike, but I like road bikes more. **Heavy Rotation:** Kitka, an Eastern European a capella group from Berkeley. **MOLLY**

CAMERON 28, pro bike racer and bike shop owner. **Bike:** This is the first track bike I ever had. It got stolen while I was running a messenger service in San Francisco and I got it back right before I moved to Portland. **Heavy Rotation:** 50 Cent. **BILL DOZER** 28, monkey on BI-cycle. **Bike:** 1970s Gitana track frame—it's gorgeous and lovely and comfortable and it's more "me" than my other bike. **Heavy Rotation:** The new Blood of Christian Children demo. **HAZEL GROSS** 28, bike messenger. **Bike:** It's an old Bianchi touring frame that I've turned into a fixed gear. **Heavy Rotation:** Dirtbones.

PLACE D'ARNES SQUARE, MONTREAL:

WILL 24, bike messenger. **Bike:** vintage Gitane, ex-Montreal Olympique velodrome. **Heavy Rotation:** UK pirate radio. **OLAF** 27, bike messenger. **Bike:** My crank arms are the wings of an angel. **Heavy Rotation:** Mighty Sparrow *More, Sparrow, More*. **ALI NICKERSON** 25, bike courier. **Bike:** Hand-built in Montreal in the '70s by a guy named Leo, 49" frame. **Heavy Rotation:** Murder City Devils. **MATHIEU COURNOYER** 24, bike courier. **Bike:** Leganano Italian track bike from the late '60s. It's handmade and too small for me. I love it! **Heavy Rotation:** Beck, Last Convergence, Arcade Fire, Blonde Redhead.



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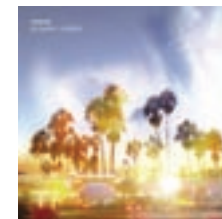
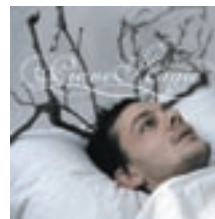
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PIANO MAGIC

A CLOSE LOOK AT DARLA RECORDS, THE DREAMY ROCK LABEL ELECTRONIC FANS FLOCK TO.



ALBUM REVIEWS 08.05

MANUAL
AZURE VISTA
Darla/US/CD

PIANO MAGIC
DISAFFECTED
Darla/US/CD

MAHOGANY
MEMORY COLUMN
Darla/US/2CD

AUBURN LULL
REGIONS LESS PARALLEL
Darla/US/CD

Somnambulism, more commonly referred to as sleepwalking, is a sleep disorder characterized by walking or doing other activity while seemingly still asleep. It's also an analogy frequently used to describe the output of California's Darla Records—for over a decade, they've lulled listeners to sleep more effectively than a double shot of Nyquil.

Evolving from the homespun charm of the living room indie, owner James Agren and his wife Chandra have worked seemingly without sleep to create a mini label and distribution empire that is currently home to 31 exclusive imprints and hundreds of bands from all over the globe. Darla is linked inexorably to a rich tradition of ambient music from Harold Budd and Brian Eno to shoegaze, space rock, dream pop, and everything in between.

These four recent releases by Darla demonstrate not only a rich historical diversity culled from the last 40 years of ambient rock but also one of the main requirements of practically all Darla bands—guitars with a serious dependence on analog reverb and delay. *Azure Vista*, the newest release from Jonas Munk a.k.a. Manual, is by far the most dense of the lot, an absolutely huge recording that layers a seemingly infinite orchestra of guitars over synthesizers and nostalgic, programmed percussion. An instrumental work of stunning magnitude, *Azure Vista* picks up where 2002's *Ascend* left

off, updating the poignant, buried melodies of Cocteau Twins and My Bloody Valentine with the urgent and memorable pop sensibility of Simple Minds and The Cure.

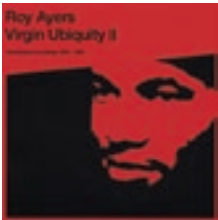
Conversely, Piano Magic's *Disaffected* marks a departure from the haunting, misery-addled minimalism that has dotted the quintet's five previous albums (reaching a climax on 2003's *The Troubled Sleep of Piano Magic*). The simplicity of the arrangements and more prominent use of vocal melodies differentiate *Disaffected* from an album like *Azure Vista* while showing the breadth of sound championed by Darla. Here the indie electronics are more subtle and complimentary (in the vein of fellow UK act Hood) and tracks like "Love & Music" and "Deleted Scenes" look to the past, once again confirming leader Glen Johnson's loyalty to a Factory Records sound shaped by Section 25 and The Durutti Column.

While both Manual and Piano Magic have a definitively European sound, loyalists will argue that the true essence of a label like Darla lies with its Stateside acts. As influential members of a now-defunct Michigan space rock scene that included Windy & Carl and Godzuki, both Auburn Lull and Mahogany share sonic touchstones with influential US acts like Galaxy 500, Low, and Yo La Tengo. Both *Regions Less Parallel* and *Memory Column* feature EPs, singles, and exclusive rarities from the respective bands, who show a striking similarity in their formulas for achieving blissful, looping dream pop. It's a sound that the crew at Darla is expertly familiar with: the sound of vivid dreaming, of walking, talking, and doing while blissfully unencumbered by the heaviness of waking life. *Steve Marchese*



DJ T.
BOOGIE PLAYGROUND
Get Physical/GER/CD

Retro ain't a gimmick when done by Get Physical guy DJ T.—it's glorious, giddy fun. Building on the electro he loved as a kid and the acid house that fueled his DJ career, T. and production partners Booka Shade have whipped up a frothy, era-ignoring album of dance tracks. From the clicking breakbeat snippets and lurching, Unique 3-style synths vs. early Nightmares on Wax vocals of "Rave d'Amour" to the Italo disco-indebted cowbells and handclaps of "Rimini Rimini Rimini," DJ T. plunders the past for grooves that just want to have fun, even if they might be forgotten (or sampled) next year. It all reaches a peak on "Rising," which begins as a simple tech-house groove with an insinuating vocal sample before gradually layering liquid keyboard lines and urgent, Chicago-jacking percussion into a shimmering dancefloor juggernaut. This is simple, devastating dance music, and damn good fun. *Peter Nicholson*



DAMON AARON
BALLAST
Plug Research/US/CD

This is the type of album to get lost in—all gentle strumming, tuneful melodies, and carefully rendered chord progressions. Damon Aaron's startlingly powerful yet quietly introspective vocal delivery draws the listener into an intensely private world. Subtle clicks, pops, and whirs swirl about mellowed hip-hop beats and strings in the intro before sliding into the almost pastoral folk of "Road Map." Songs like "All I Need" take on shades of retro electronica beneath layers of acoustic guitar, and a head-nodding interlude provides a brief moment of head-clearing before plunging back in. Lovely all around, *Ballast* is unassuming at first but reveals its depth with each successive listen. *Christine Hsieh*

AFU-RA
STATE OF THE ARTS
Decon/US/CD

Coming into the game as a protégé of Jeru, Afu-Ra dropped a very impressive debut LP (*Body of the Life Force*) and a so-so sophomore piece (*Life Force Radio*). On his third go-around, the BK mic warrior sounds refreshed and rejuvenated, flirting with a variety of production styles (including dancehall and retro metal) while still spouting the conscious-but-streetwise wordplay we've come to expect. Sporting solid beats from Premier and PF Cuttin', plus rowdy collabos with Masta Killa and Royce Da 5' 9", *State Of The Arts* bangs throughout, a triumphant comeback record ideal for summer block-rocking. *Brolin Winning*

THE AWAY TEAM
NATIONAL ANTHEM
6 Hole/US/CD

The Justus League crew claims some of the hottest names in hip-hop right now, including superproducer 9th Wonder and Little Brother; now North Carolina's The Away Team steps up with their debut. Rhymers Sean Boog and producer Khrysis keep *National Anthem* well within the Justus aesthetic: Khrysis offers filtered soul hooks and deceptively simple arrangements that are harder-edged and a bit less catchy than 9th Wonder's work, while Sean Boog keeps up with workman-like rhymes. The funny liquor ode "Likka Hi (Last Call)," R&B love jam "One-N-Only," and swinging posse cut "On the Line" show versatility and promise. *Rob Geary*

ROY AYERS
VIRGIN UBIQUITY II
BBE-Rapster/US/CD

When legendary bandleader Lionel Hampton gave five-year old Roy Ayers a pair of vibe mallets after a performance in LA, he planted an inspirational seed. Ayers grew up to play vibes for artists as diverse as Herbie Mann and Guru. This second compilation of previously unavailable tracks draws from the period when the LA-native peaked commercially. Included is a demo version of his classic, "Everybody Loves the Sunshine," a track notably sampled on Mary J. Blige's single "My Life." The jazz-based R&B of "Holiday," featuring the sultry Terry Wells, shows why many have dubbed Ayers the godfather of neo-soul. *James Mayo*

BEAT PHARMACY
EARTHLY DELIGHTS
Deep Space Media /US/CD

Francois K could not have picked a better candidate to launch his Deep Space Media label with. An offshoot of his tremendously popular Monday night weekly, Deep Space NYC at Cielo, *Earthly Delights* is everything this party is about: midtempo rhythms with warm chest hits and dubbed grooves. Beat Pharmacy (Brendon Moeller) explores an emotional soundscape rooted in Afro and Jamaican sounds, the ulterior groove on "Cape Town" (his hometown) draws you in with a repetitive synth before filling out into a six-minute horn-led sprawl. Paul St. Hilaire's two vocal contributions ("Race Track Jockey" and "Don't Bodda Me") give a lyrical lift to this exploration of instrumental brilliance. *Derek Beres*

BEN HUMAN
THE OUT OF TOWNER
MALENTE
RIP IT UP
Unique/GER/CD

Ben Human is either trying too hard or not hard enough. He layers samples into a retro-funk-lounge-breaks thing, occasionally admirably (e.g., the title track). But often Human (a.k.a. Ben Addison of Corduroy) gets glib, and his music displays a wearying tongue-in-cheek quality. In contrast, Malente's album (remixes of previous work plus three new tracks) grooves far better. The funky breaks here feel more genuine. Dr. Rubberfunk's sitar boogie mix of "I Sell Marihuana" manages to be both really good and funny, and new track "Dancefloor Whore" will make sense to anyone who's ever closed out a dancefloor—something it sounds like Malente's done plenty. *Luciana Lopez*

BIG POOH
SLEEPERS
6 Hole/US/CD

The least-hyped member of NC trio Little Brother, Big Pooh languished in the shadows as critics heaped praise on 9th Wonder and Phonte. With his solo debut, Pooh proves he's no second-stringer, dropping a bevy of strong verses over warm, sample-drenched tracks, mostly from 9th and Justus League homie Khrysis. Mellow, mid-tempo joints dominate, with laid back but articulate verses that address females ("Just Friends,"

"Between The Lines") and the sometimes grim realities of daily life ("Heart of the City," "The Jungle"). For anybody still dozing on the kid, *Sleepers* is your wake-up call. *Brolin Winning*

BOOM BAP PROJECT
REPROGRAM
Rhymesayers/US/CD

The verses on *Reprogram*, the new album from Seattle's Boom Bap Project, couldn't be more different from the diary-like raps of their Rhymesayers label mate Slug. But while MCs Karim and Destro don't pour their hearts out, their elemental yet precise wordplay and heavy beats are often just as captivating. Even without getting too pensive, they've got the gusto to keep heads nodding. With the assistance of fellow Northwest reps like Jake One, Mr. Hill, and Lifesavas, BBP drops 15 flavorful tracks of unadulterated hip-hop. *Max Herman*

DAREDIABLO
TWENTY PACES
Southern/US/CD

Somewhere, on a dimly lit street in Gravesend, Brooklyn, a wannabe mobster cousin of a genuine made man is getting an overdue beating for staring a little too long at the wrong girl. For this and countless other made-to-order ass kickings, Darediablo has unknowingly provided a soundtrack. The trio's thick, voiceless setup of Rhodes, bass, and drums not only rips like the ghost of Booker T channeled through the hands of Tony Iommi, but the band's keen mixture of both groove and grit will appeal to hard rockers, metal heads, soul lovers, and perhaps even a hardened thug or two. *Steve Marchese*

KIRK DEGIORGIO PRESENTS AS ONE
ELEGANT SYSTEMS
Versatile/FRA/CD

Kirk Degiorgio sounds like a happy man. Buoyantly chugging techno on "Rumours," blissfully floating ambiance on "Luca's Smile" (named for his baby boy), and even song titles like "This Precious Life" and "Magical Thinking" point to a man who is at peace. Thankfully, this veteran jazz-techno fusionist still tortures his analog synths enough to provoke some stunning sounds: the sticky bass of "Response Ability" cries out for a massive sound system turned to 11, and the intricately woven pads and hissing clicks of the title track astound like the view through a microscope. It seems criminal to ask for just a dash more (a bit of grit, a moment of menace), but what are critics if not criminals? *Peter Nicholson*

DJ SHADOW
ENDTRODUCING—DELUXE EDITION
Universal-Island/US/CD

Most of the reasons why this album moved me are too irrational and sentimental to be written here. Josh Davis' classic '96 debut proved that instrumental hip-hop could arrest the imagination in ways that the English language cannot. How he translated literal piles of discarded funk, soul, jazz, and classical records into music that seemed so futuristic at the time is a mystery. This reissue—which digitally polishes the original album and throws in a bonus disc of demos, overdub-free mixes, B-sides, and a live track—is best when it leaves that mystery unsolved. Listen to the bonuses just once; they are crumbled up sketches, with the exception of Cut Chemist's golden touch on "The Number Song." While *Endroducing's* turntable-mixed beats sound rather sluggish in our DSP age and not every idea has aged well, this album still makes hip-hop's future look bright. *Cameron Macdonald*

DOJO
ADAPTATION
Dojosound/US/CD

Broadcasting from their Denver HQ, the Dojo hip-hop collective, fronted by The Analog Suspect and Selecta Roswell, releases their fourth album with 360 degrees of local remix talent. The dynamics of the album complement the already hi-tech bushido of the original works, employing the fragmented digitalia of Nobot Media droids Equulei and CacheFlowe while The Draconians and Diverse keep things on street level. Elements of nu-school breaks, broken jazz, dub, and the sonic wood-chipper diplomacy of Relapse-expatriate This Will Hurt You round the album out nicely as the MC constituency keeps the lyrical calculus in check. *Doug Morton*

DOUBLE U
A BOTTLE IN THE SEA
Karat/FRA/CD

Last year, Franck "Double U" Rabeyrolles quietly delivered one of the least-noticed, most stirring electronic debuts with his intensely lonely *Life Through A Window*. Rabeyrolles' sophomore effort continues his exploration of the fragile space between folk, ambient melody, and poetry with a noticeably less electronic edge than his previous work. Rabeyrolles keeps his music from sounding precious by drawing upon both the whimsical and the deeply personal, resulting in pieces like "Such A Cry," which strongly channels Ms. John Soda and Prefuse 73 after 10 Valiums and folk singing lessons. *Janet Tzou*

DUB GABRIEL
BASS JIHAD
Azra/US/CD

The droning seven minutes of "Musique de Lame" are so hypnotically tranquil one wouldn't dream the effervescent chaos of the *mizmar*-blaring "War in the Poppy Fields" came from the same record. Such is the maddened mind of Brooklyn-based bassist/producer Dub Gabriel. On *Bass Jihad*, his follow-up to the excellent *Ascend*, Gabriel revisits Arabic strings and horns while dubbing down the low-end with true Rasta artistry. "Zooklyn" showcases Middle Eastern percussion with heady electronica while proving his penchant for inventive song naming. The cross-cultural fusion is a philosophical masterpiece you don't have to think too hard about. Simply lay back and enjoy the ride. *Derek Beres*



BABY JAYMES
GHETTO RETRO
Ghetto Retro/US/CD

This is the kind of album you almost want to keep to yourself and not tell anybody about, like it's your little secret. Except, it's so good—original, funky, nasty, and surprisingly poignant in spots—you'll want to share it with someone special, and then they'll know too. In any event, Baby Jaymes is a hip-hop generation throwback to the days when you just weren't hip if you didn't have a stack of soul 45s under your arm at all times. The diminutive phenomenon is an honest-to-god soul singer from the 'hood who seemingly longs for the chitlin circuit, but is comfortable doing duets with turf stars like Keak Da Sneak and Balance. Provocative album cuts like "Black Girl/White Girl," "Nasty R&B," and "Miss Ghetto" have earned Jaymes comparisons to Prince, and, for once, you can believe the hype. *Eric K. Arnold*

ET SANS
PAR NOUSSSS TOUSS LES TREUS DE VOS CRANES!

Alien 8/CAN/CD
Equal parts industrial, noise-pop, and psychedelia, Et Sans' *Par Nousssss...* is another coup for Montreal's envelope-pushing Alien 8 recordings. Outer space effects commingle with whispers, pulsating organic thuds, pounds, and chants and fleeting hints of piano chords, ghost notes and haunted timbres. Just when the melancholy threatens to overwhelm, however, enough backbeat will come into the picture to bring you back to reality, or at least Et Sans' version of it. Not a bad place to be, really... *Alex Posell*

THE EXPOSURES
LOST RECORDINGS 2000-2004

Eastern Developments/US/CD
On *Lost Recordings 2000-2004*, Berlin producer Jan Jelinek fabricates an aging three-man German ensemble to take responsibility for his own creations. Jelinek (Farben, Gramm) first exposed The Exposures on 2003's jazzbient gem *La Nouvelle Pauvrete*. Now Jelinek even pens deceptive liner notes to accompany the eight tracks here. However, the subtle DSP treatments applied with seductive grit are unmistakably Jelinek. These heavy-lidded, languid mutations of instrumental hip-hop sound like East Dev boss Prefuse 73's productions chopped and screwed to a soulful slouch. We see through your hoax, Jan, and we love it anyway. *Dave Segal*

FENIN
GROUNDED

Shitkatapult/GER/CD
Having made a name for himself with his uniquely threaded minimal techno style, Lars Fenin makes reggae the centerpiece of his new album, *Grounded*. Does it work? To a degree. The production is clean and balanced, ranging from electrified reggae-vocal numbers like "No CIA" and "Thrill" to the deeper techno dubbery of "Stony Road" and "Got It." However, the digital cleanliness seems to beg for a little filth to richen things up, and coupled with some overall lo-cal sequencing, the album comes up a little thin in the original flavor department. *Doug Morton*

GE-OLGY
GE-OLGY PLAYS GE-OLGY

Female Fun/US/CD
A producer of soulful yet coldly chilling beats in the vein of Pete Rock and Jay Dee, Geology's name should pull some serious weight but, despite his history producing 2Pac's first recordings and aiding Black Star's first album, he remains relatively obscure. With his first feature LP for the instrumentally-minded Female Fun, the artist so seamlessly mixes instrumentals from his back catalog that it sounds like one long track. While he's one of a few contemporary hip-hop producers whose beats all sound good enough to listen to on their own, it's the handful of vocal tracks included here—namely the Consequence-laced party

rocker "Fasho" and a remix of Pete Rock and Grand Agent's "This is What They Meant"—that give the LP the needed push to make it interesting. *Jesse Serwer*

GIANT PANDA
FLY SCHOOL REUNION

Tres/US/CD
The members of LA-based Giant Panda wear their affinity for hip-hop's past proudly on their sleeves. With *Fly School Reunion*, this multiracial crew certainly makes their forefathers proud—especially when they shout out their favorite decade in hip-hop on the A Tribe Called Quest-ish cut "90's." Even when they humorously regurgitate modern racial stereotypes on the outstanding single "Racist," they still sound like a blast from the past. Much like their collaborator Thes One of People Under The Stairs, they know how to produce carefree, party-starting hip-hop that celebrates a time when the music wasn't so solemn. *Max Herman*

THE HERBALISER
TAKE LONDON

Ninja Tune/UK/CD
With over a decade of work and a handful of albums, the UK's The Herbaliser still has yet to really catch on in the States. Taking over London isn't a bad idea for now, but they're capable of more. If all goes well, the addition of MC Jean Grae on numerous tracks will help them awake the majority of sleepy American hip-hoppers. However, whether they have an MC on board or not, The Herbaliser's cinematic blend of organic jazz and funk makes for an enjoyable and often suspenseful listen. *Take London* is soundtrack-worthy hip-hop for the new millennium. *Max Herman*

EZEKIEL HONIG & MORGAN PACKARD
EARLY MORNING MIGRATION

Microcosm/US/CD
Although the tracks on *Early Morning Migration* are split evenly between label-mates Ezekiel Honig and Morgan Packard, the album sticks closely to the somnambulant ambience of Honig's solo output, with none of the meatier drum&bass Packard is known for. However, that doesn't make this collaboration any less of a beauty. *Early Morning Migration* trickles elegantly into the subconscious with whispered percussive elements and the clicks and skitters of artificial (or real?) pebbles falling on pavement. Variations do develop, as repeated listens reveal a muted interplay between the slightly off-kilter effect of Honig's "found sound" pastiches and Packard's more pristine melodic loops. *Anna Balkrishna*

J.D.S.
THE ADVENTURES OF THE PURPLE FUNKY MONKEY

TCR/UK/CD
Breakbeat's renaissance offers up Julian Napolitano and Darren Pearce as the duo all the heavy hitters lurve. Sixteen tracks here follow on from JDS' FFRR stint ("Nine Ways") and solo flier "Purple Funky Monkey." "Dirty Funk" continues the trend of heroin-grade hooks, stripped-down beats, and plush bass, along with iz-old skiz-ool funkster "This is Kalifornia." "Freaky," "Rockstar," "Good Old Days," "We Got Conga," "Disco Rockers"—catch the J.D.S. drift? With this sweat-inducing soundtrack, these monkeys prove themselves major breakbeat players and a mutual remix society is bound to proliferate. *Stacy Meyn*

KID SUBLIME
BASEMENT SOUL

Kindred Spirits/NETH/CD
If Kid Sublime's *Basement Soul* is to be believed, Amsterdam's Stateside sister city should be Philadelphia. Philly's stew of hip-hop, R&B, and house—as played by everyone from The Roots to Jazzy Jeff to Vikter Duplaix—seems to have reached the headphones of Kid Sublime, as his debut is a collection that unites rappers and singers from America and the Netherlands in a good-time soulful groove. *Basement Soul* is drenched in old school flavor and future sounds with warm, funky arrangements and the occasional unexpected breakbeat coda—methinks this Kid should spend some time on these shores. *Rob Geary*

JAMIE LIDELL
MULTIPLY

Warp/UK/CD
Multiply proves that this pasty-faced Brit is the most soulful motherfucker alive. Jamie Lidell's second solo joint takes a huge detour from his 2000 debut, *Muddlin Gear*, and even from Super_Collider's Cubist R&B. Where his first album busted mad experimental electronic moves that surely planted a permagratin on Aphex's

mug, *Multiply* is Lidell's earnest stab at soul-singer deification. And he *nails* it. Those expecting a disc of outrageous vocal experiments à la Lidell's 2004 Mutek set will be stunned by *Multiply*'s conventionality. But Lidell's voice and production have the funk and soul to melt the hearts of Stevie, Marvin, Al, James, and Prince. Seriously. *Dave Segal*

MEDICATIONS
ALL YOUR FAVORITE PEOPLE ALL IN ONE PLACE

Dischord/US/CD
In order to prevent major labels from co-opting Fugazi's sound, Dischord has signed every group that bears the slightest sonic resemblance to the pioneering punk band. This album is plagued by lackluster musicianship, over-long songs and high school poetry lyrics about how you shouldn't take your psych meds. Is the final track—with its basic drum lesson 4/4 and evenly strummed single guitar chord—a commentary on the deadening rhythms of modern life? Because even if it is, it's still boring. Great title, though. *Ben Bush*

MINOTAUR SHOCK
MARITIME

4AD/US/CD
Four Tet and Caribou (née Manitoba) may have forsaken acoustica to make engaging odes to freakbeat percussion, but Bristol's David "Minotaur Shock" Edwards still wields a jaunty calliope of a laptop as a lasting cornerstone of the folktronica movement. Indeed, fans of whimsical, warbling melodies will find *Maritime* is plenty shipshape. Beats peck, shuffle, and skip; synths roll, shimmer, and flutter. Is that timpani? A vibraphone? Clarinet? A seagull's caw? Certain tracks, with their soft focus instrumentation, even seem to have a Trevor Horn touch to them, balanced out by some Moroder oscillations—and all of it set adrift on memory bliss. *Tony Ware*

BARBARA MORGENSTERN + ROBERT LIPPOK
TESRI

Monika/GER/CD
In 2002 German producers Barbara Morgenstern (collaborator with Pole and Console) and Robert Lippok (of To Rococo Rot) cooperated for a Domino Records subsidiary; the 12-track *Tesri* is the result of continued sessions. The album is comprised of melodies constructed in miniature. Where the duo thinks big is in overlapping fragments of staccato electric piano, fluttery acoustic guitar, rounded analog pulse, and minimalist electro bob. "Sommer" (showcasing the most hushed, honeyed, and hovering of Morgenstern's qualities) and "Winter" are original collaboration holdovers, with everything else exclusive. Small melodies attracting big-time attention include "Please Wake Me Up For Meals," "Gammelpop," and the Spacek-like croon of "If The Day Remains Unspoken" (featuring Telefon Tel Aviv's Damon Aaron). *Tony Ware*

MR. SCRUFF
NINJA TUNE/UK/CD

Before he carved out a place of honor in the Ninja Tune stable, Mr. Scruff was a nubile young thing developing an impressive back catalog on Pleasure Records. His pre-Ninja material is surprisingly fresh nearly 10 years on, and here one sees the genesis of his cut-and-paste beat doctoring on "Bass Baby," his knack for sampling disparate elements in the frantic whistle-and-drums classic "Chicken in a Box," and his affinity for loose-limbed jazz in "Bobby's Jazz Pony." Scruff's mastery of hokey beats and catchy tunes had to come from somewhere, and *Mr. Scruff* offers welcome insight into his creative growth. *Christine Hsieh*

MUSIC A.M.
MY CITY GLITTERED LIKE A BREAKING WAVE

Quatermass/GER/CD
The Euro trio known as Music A.M. has undertaken a lovely mission: to prove that laptop electronica can be just as warm and wistful as any indie rock. Their five-track mini-album is thoughtfully crafted, crammed full of unexpected melodies and barely audible sounds in every musical corner. The electronic rubbing noise throughout "Don't Keep Me Waiting So Long" might chafe slightly, but the romantic pull of "Supercharger, I Adore You" and Luke Sutherland's throaty crooning will make you long to see the film that these cinematic tunes would be so choice with. *Janet Tzou*

THE NARRATOR
SUCH TRIUMPH

Flameshovel/US/CD
Though they hail from Chicago, a town better known for terrapin-influenced post-rock, The Narrator's impassioned and refined wailings are surprisingly, well, rockin'. With nary a self-masturbatory noodle here nor an über-produced timbre there, *Such Triumph*

is driving, straight ahead indie-rock for the flannel-coated masses. On the excellent "Pregnant Boys," cries of "*There's no better reason than no reason at all*" express reverently that particular brand of Midwestern angst previously offered by bands such as Hüsker Dü and Dinosaur Jr, while the muddy undertow of "Abcdefghijklmnopqrs" conjures images of frozen lakes in January, with winter winds whipping a fine film of ice dust across the surface. *Alex Posell*

ODD NOSDAM
BURNER

Why?
SANDDOLLARS EP
Anticon/US/CD
This Odd Nosdam is weirdly Enya-esque and at the same time totally fucking good—full of sleepy hip-hop beats and hypnotic analog keyboards, although there's a bit too many ambient field recordings between the "songs" for my taste. Why?'s *Sanddollars* EP is too unusual and intricate to brush off as a novelty record with its nasal vocals, concert hall grand pianos, and guitar rock songs about the joys of staying up all night tagging. Both albums utilize dreamy production that seems to typify the multi-faceted, multi-tiered umbrella of Anticon projects. *Ben Bush*

POLE FOLDER
ZERO GOLD

Bedrock/UK/CD
What happens when you take big-room trancey club tracks, slow down the bpm, and drop in Enigma-like vocals? You get something that sounds like it belongs more on adult contemporary radio than in an elegant cocktail lounge. It's clear that Pole Folder's Benoit Franquet was shooting for a chill, ethereal album with a positive vibe,



DAN BERRIDGE

BROADWAY PROJECT
IN FINITE

Grand Central/UK/CD
Hardly anyone captures malaise and misanthropic tension quite as well as Dan Berridge. *In Finite* exceeds in cinematic scope and instrumental proficiency his deceptively dense 2003 album *The Vessel*, yet sheds a bit of the hazy anxiety and murky emotional underworld he so aptly depicted in his stunning 2001 debut *Compassion*. Less introspective and more worldly, Berridge's latest effort is a cleaner, more polished and, in some respects, more aggressive exploration of the shadowy sonic territory connecting jazz, hip-hop, and electronic music. Opening strong with urgent strums and ethereal bells in "K," Berridge quickly descends into a tightly packed mélange of beats, breaks, exotic instruments, and punishing bass in "Blood in the Temple" before pulling back and retreating slightly into a fog of despair, tentative hope, and pain brought to sharp and unforgiving light in "Debouch." *In Finite* is a remarkable album of unsurpassed beauty. *Christine Hsieh*



MATHEMATICS
THE PROBLEM

Nature Sounds/US/CD
Producing and DJing with Wu-Tang for many years now, Mathematics may not have the props, classic catalog, or name recognition of RZA or 4th Disciple, but dude definitely knows how to make beats, as evidenced by his stellar work on *Supreme Clientele* alone. In 2003 he dropped his first proper album, *Love, Hell or Right*, which, despite a fam-heavy guest list, wasn't really that great. On *The Problem*, Math's production is noticeably stronger and the emcees (the entire Wu plus several younger Queens cats) all sound genuinely hungry. Minor-key organ vamps and sweeping vibraphones propel "Winta Sno," while the ill bassline and choppy drums of "Real Nillaz" could be a lost track from *Cuban Linx*. Not every song works, but the ones that do are outstanding. Though haters may question the Clan's relevance in 2005, Mathematics brings out the best in the Shaolin supercrew, resurrecting the franchise with his impressive instrumentals. *Brolin Winning*



and some of *Zero Gold's* sound design and trance washes are sweepingly beautiful; unfortunately, most of its beatwork sounds thuddingly monotonous. Franquet's lack of interest in playing with rhythm results in washed-out club ditties rather than stirring downtempo creations. *Janet Tzou*

POPULOUS
QUEUE FOR LOVE
Morr Music/UK/CD

Queue For Love, Populous' second album, is unusual in that it features hip-hop at its most abstract—there are drifting, soundtrack-style cuts here, plus a glitchy beat bath featuring rapper Dose One. The record also explores the age-old formula of fusing heavy beats with killer jazz samples, as executed with aplomb on "Pawn Shop Close," "Sundae Ptc," and "The Dixie Saga." The best track, though, is the closer "Drop City"—a glorious collision of both old and new. *Dave Stenton*



PRAVEEN
BACKED BY SPIRITS
Neo Quija/UK/CD

New York City IDM-operative Praveen Sharma could not have found a label more apt for his debut album. Softly fragmented melodies and iridescent ambience swirl together with subliminal depth on tracks like "Cecilia's Fruit" and "Melody" while "New Lovers" and "Piano in a Hurricane" complement the label's signature fusion of organic instrumentation in the artificial realm. "Real Memories" steps through a cooled cascade of symphonic echoes at a glitch-punctuated hip-hop tempo, followed in form by "Float" and "Haze" with further rhythmic explorations. The sonic imagery of *Backed By Spirits* is so vivid, you can almost watch the entire album. *Doug Morton*



PRINCE PAUL
ITSTRUMENTAL
Female Fun/US/CD

Prince Paul is no doubt hip-hop royalty. With a resume as long as it is brilliant, the clown prince of production returns with another quirky record full of breaks, attitude and comedy. If his contributions to The Gravediggaz, De La Soul, Stetsasonic, and Boogie Down Productions cemented his legendary status, then *ItsTRUmental* is a friendly reminder of his constant aim to entertain. Tracks such as "Live @ 5" (where all instruments are played by Paul himself), "Flattery," and "El Ka Bong" reflect a hip-hop heavyweight who refreshingly takes his music more seriously than he does himself. *David Ma*

THE QUANTIC SOUL ORCHESTRA
PUSHIN ON
Ubiquity/US/CD

For such a clean-cut collection of percussive precision, there sure is a mighty stank comin' off *Pushin On*, The Quantic Soul Orchestra's second full-length. Raw, hypnotic funk and cinematic library instrumentals share space here with Lyn Collins-esque workouts and Rotary Connection-style compositions featuring vocalist Alice Russell. It's all tailor-made for those who like their summers frantic and sleepless. Even *Pushin On's* mellow tracks are love-scene interludes rather than nightcaps, and when QSO hits a groove they like, time is swallowed by that black hole that only the nastiest funk drops create. Nearly perfect. *Justin Hopper*

RANKING JOE
WORLD IN TROUBLE
M/NETH/CD

Listen to Ranking Joe's *World In Trouble* and you'll think one of two things: either Joe's repetitive pro-Jah/anti-Babylon chants are lyrical tools facilitating greater roots-man consciousness; or Joe is the world's worst lyricist. At least there's no debating *World* contains some real tough roots reggae riddims. Pleasant surprises include the ska-roots (Skaboom) remix of the title track by UK outfit Vibronics, and a bonus remix cut of "Don't Follow Babylon," featuring former Black Uhuru front-man Mykal Rose. There's some potential here—just don't expect Joe to reinvigorate the genre. *Araya Crosskill*

RÖYKSOPP
THE UNDERSTANDING
TURIN BRAKES
JACKINABOX
Astralwerks/US/CD

Everything old is new again—Røyksopp and Turin Brakes are refashioning tried-and-true sounds into music that, while vaguely familiar, doesn't contain any irony. Turin Brakes goes back to a pre-dance-punk era somewhere around the Britpop peak and does so with considerable success in the punchy "Over and Over," "Red Moon," and sweeping pop melodies of "Fishing For A Dream." Røyksopp's *The Understanding* is considerably less subtle: a bit of prog-house in "Only This Moment," a bit of garage (remember that?) in "49 Percent" and a bit of '80s pop in "What Else Is There?" *Christine Hsieh*

MATHIAS SCHAFFHÄUSER
COINCIDANCE
Ware/GER/CD

If Cologne's techno scene were a public swimming pool, Mathias Schaffhäuser might represent the "deep" end—while he knows how to throw down dark and minimal, he also doesn't shy away from melody and emotion. This effect on Schaffhäuser's fifth album, *Coincidence*, can occasionally be overwrought: the sing-song vocals on this year's hit, "Truthology," may work on dancefloors but are quickly cloying here. The album is best when kept simple, as with the crunchy tech stomper "Episode 3" or the beautifully subdued "Dear Elliott," featuring acoustic guitar whispers from the late Elliott Smith's "Bled White." *Anna Balkrishna*

SHUKAR COLLECTIVE
URBAN GYPSY
Riverboat/US/CD

Bear taming and electronic music make an interesting junction in sonic history, and *Urban Gypsy* documents it. The seven members of Romania-based Shukar Collective modernize the Eastern European equivalent of the Egyptian *zurna*, using spoons, shouting, and percussion to tame their appointed beasts. Layering this folk tradition with throbbing basslines and witty drumbeats, electroclash meets d&b alongside quirky dulcimers and synthesizers. The hearty double bass on "Oh, Mother," which underscores the plaintive yelps of the vocalist (the Shukars don't particularly sing), is like walking through a second-hand market searching for a prize. When the bouncing beat of "Gipsy Blooz" emerges, you know you've found it. *Derek Beres*

SINISTRI
FREE PULSE
GIUSEPPE IELASI
GESINE
Hapna/SWE/CD

Italian quartet Sinistri formerly operated as Starfuckers, purveyors of the most stiltedly asymmetrical and egoless rock ever. As Sinistri, this foursome further fractures their unique sound into an absurdly sparse anti-rock/post-jazz that's endlessly baffling and unpredictable. A rationality-defying mind-fuck (free, my ass; this is utterly *ana!*), *Free Pulse* is the most puzzling album of 2005. Countryman Giuseppe Ielasi sounds like an Italo Loren Connors, bathing his poignantly pensive guitar spangles in frigid, spectral ambience that fills in the spaces Connors leaves empty. Ielasi's fragile, tender blues dispersions put a spellbinding chill on you. *Dave Segal*

SKELETONS AND THE GIRL-FACED BOYS
GIT
Ghostly International/US/CD

Git isn't merely esoteric. At points, it's so unhinged that it's in danger of spinning off the planet. Melodies, rhythms, and atmospheres develop and dead-end at will, creating a cacophony that sounds like equal parts glitch electronica, The Unicorns' pop playfulness, and middle school choir. But that's not a knock against this original and striking musical collage. Willfully weird music can have its moments, and *Git* is full of them. If you can follow this album's internal logic, it's quite a trip. *Patrick Sisson*

SOLID GOLD PLAYAS
ALONE
OFFSHORE FUNK
CROME
Kanzleramt/GER/CD

Though they hail from Wisconsin, Solid Gold Playas' Big Mike and Kenny Gino are geographically and musically adjacent to Chicago. Their debut release, *Alone*, is classic deep house, meaning *deep*, not *diva*. Standouts include "Soul on Fire," "Le Soul Afrique," and "Imagins of Passions," all of which share a mesmerizing, opiate-induced take on spellbinding soul and dreamy Afro-futurism. On the techier end of the spectrum, but no less funky, Offshore Funk provides a mellow journey into the 4 a.m. side of house music. Heroin atmospheres are offset by Eurocentric electro-grooves, glitchy accidents, and broken-beat polyrhythms. Equally suited for a daytime party, twilight road trip, or an evening at home with close friends. *Alex Posell*

STUDIO PANKOW
LINIENBUSSE
City Centre Offices/UK/CD

Studio Pankow marks the return of pioneering UK producers David Moufang and Jamie Hodge, alongside German artist Kai Kroker—the trio takes their name from Kroker's Berlin-based studio. Despite visiting the German capital three times to record *Linienbusse*, the Brits claim to have spent less than one hour in total outside the studio...and it shows. The majority of the dub-oriented tracks here are claustrophobic in the extreme and crackle with an all too rare intensity. *Dave Stenton*

SUV
FOLLOW THE SUN
Majestic/US/2CD

Not a vehicle, Bristol-born (former Fresh Four member) DJ Suv sports a wicked hairdo and tosses his own beats to boot. Roni Size's Full Cycle loans out Surge and DJ Krust for remix duties, and guests like vocalists Carmen Medina and Tali, MCs T-Rox and Darrison, and flutist Hannah Porter help. CD 1 (*Global*) goes ethnobeat—think Latin, Dutch, Chinese, and Indian grooves with occasional big band moments. CD 2 (*Drum & Bass*) slides riddim with nu-jazz tips and real instrumentation, getting busy in Brazil. *Stacy Meyn*

TBA
ANNULE
MaxErnst/GER/CD

Tusia Beridze (TBA)'s *Annule* is an uneven slew of listless vamp ballads, Aphexian synth tinkering, fragmented examinations of her soul, and trip-hop excursions. There is little here that has not been done by many others in their bedroom studios, but some moments haunt. "Urs" is a deathbed lullaby, as Beridze struggles to paint verses with her last breath, and her whispers draw blood in the moribund dub of "B-Ian." She also executes some fine swordsmanship on the title track's broken beats and an acute sense of tomfuckery on the Gameboy jumble of "Dread." Keep her under watch. *Cameron Macdonald*

TELEPOPMUSICK
ANGEL MILK
Capitol/US/CD

This album's strength is also its weakness: the French trio focuses so hard on texture that sometimes they slide into navel-gazing. Many tracks (like "Stop Running Away") never really get going. But sometimes *Angel Milk* works, as on "Last Train To Wherever," where breathy male vocals, slow synths, and harsh buzzing layer into an almost-tangible lushness, and "Love's Almighty," where vocalist Angela McClusky sounds like a cross between Shirley Bassey and Esthero. There's enough meat here to say that Telepopmusic has avoided the sophomore album curse. *Luciana Lopez*

TONEDEFF
ARCHETYPE
QNS/US/CD

Growing up in Miami, Tonedeff learned to rap by freestyling over the region's popular 120-plus bpm records. You can tell by listening to the hyperkinetic flow he brings to "Heavyweight." Lines like "*I stay flagrant with lyrics nastier than Tammy Faye bathing*" drop faster than Lil' Kim's dress at a music industry gathering. The hilarious "Pervert" sounds like a sped-up Biz Markie chopped up with Mozart. He displays a serious side on "Politics" and "Masochist," which breathes life into the tired subject of the plight of the indie rapper. Tonedeff's quotable quotient is worth the listen, if you can keep up. *James Mayo*

TRANSGLOBAL UNDERGROUND
IMPOSSIBLE BROADCASTING
TriLoka-Artemis/US/CD

On their sixth studio recording, London-based Transglobal Underground rests safe in the fact they never know who they'll be tomorrow. This makes for some interesting recording—Asia, Jamaica, Bulgaria, and India are all over *Impossible Broadcasting*—but the album lacks coherency. Killer tracks—like the dub-heavy "The Sikhman and The Rasta" (led by the patois anagrams of Tuup) and "Stoyane/Male-Le" featuring Trio Bulgaria—are sandwiched between utter nonsense like the rah-rah one-world "Drinking in Gomorrah." Have another drink and get back to business boys. *Derek Beres*

LUKE VIBERT
LOVER'S ACID
Planet Mu/UK/CD

Like new batteries juicing up a classic Atari console, Luke Vibert's trademark obsession with shifting rhythmic sequences makes these gritty, acid-tossed textures sound electrifying again. It's this veteran composer's keenness for shaping mood, however, that charges up his tracks with feeling: dark, eerie ambience opens "Prick Tat," only to ebb into something wistful and bittersweet. Traces of Vibert's ambient hip-hop persona Wagon Christ and nods to the early work of pals Aphex and µ-Ziq float throughout these melodic pieces like friendly specters. "Analord" and "Come On Chaos," in particular, affectionately revisit a time when techno music was just beginning to emerge in its own right. *Janet Tzou*



COLONEL RED
BLUE EYED BLAK
People/UK/CD

Future jazz fans, you know the voice—that smoky, whiskey-soaked countertenor and falsetto on Mustang's "Help Me," John Beltran's "True Colors," and Delgui's "It's Gonna Be Alright." If you're not familiar, here's a smooth, super-soulful introduction to Colonel Red (Nick Romillie). A singer who's been dropping his curving, jazz-crafty croon for well over a dozen years, Red's wealth of experience comes to the fore as he restrains his scat over the broken Afrobeat of "U Gimmi That Feeling" and paces his delivery like a pro on the title track, building plenty tension with Rasiyah (Restless Soul). But *Blue Eyed Blak* is about more than Red's vocal talents—Red did most of the playing, production, and arrangement on his own and his elegant blend of broken beats and loungey R&B makes for a beautiful, if occasionally tepid, backdrop for his singular voice. *Peter Nicholson*



T. RAUMSCHMIERE
BLITZKRIEG POP
Mute/US/CD

If you're a fan of tightly orchestrated, synth-stylized staccato instrumentation that broods rather than blurts, Nine Inch Nails' *With Teeth* may well be your album of 2005. But if you miss the days where pretty hate machines were sleazy and buffeting rather than melodramatically swelling and sulking, then dig *your* nails into the *Blitzkrieg Pop* of Berlin's T. Raumschmiere. The serrated opening track, "Sick Like Me" (featuring Raumschmiere's own vocals), could be an alternate take of NIN's caustic "Wish" (off 1992's *Broken*). Throbbing "Diving in Whiskey" (featuring Ellen Allien on vocals) and "A Very Loud Lullaby" are kin to Metropolis Records-style EBM. Tracks such as "All Systems Go!" and "Der Grottenholm" still co-opt Kompakt Records' *schaffle* beat, but for the most part *Blitzkrieg Pop* celebrates the corroded trills of vaguely Gothic retro even over Raumschmiere's own gnarled glam stomp. Writhe, you skinny puppies, writhe. *Tony Ware*

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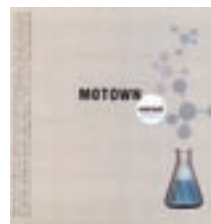
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CURTIS MAYFIELD



ARE CLASSIC SOUL REMIX ALBUMS
ENTICING YOUNG EARS OR DEFLING
VINTAGE PERFORMANCES?



If Motown made over rhythm and blues into easily digestible R&B that crossed over to mainstream America, Curtis Mayfield was the conscience of soul music, besides being a founding father of funk. Both have been sampled and interpolated more times than one can count, and their legacy has provided the template for everything from deep house to smooth R&B to hardcore hip-hop. On the surface, two new remix albums based on Motown and Mayfield's catalogs would seem like an excellent idea, and following in the footsteps of the recent Verve and Blue Note remix projects, we get *Motown Remixed* and *Mayfield: Remixed*.

The Motown project is listenable, but the songs and their arrangements are so famous, it's hard for even the most talented remixer to modernize them without losing something. It's quite telling that two of the album's best tracks—Mocean Worker's kinetic version of Rare Earth's "I Just Want to Celebrate" and DJ Spinna's nu-funk rinse of Eddie Kendricks' "Keep On Truckin'"—are among the more obscure Motown hits. Other attempts—like Z-Trip's "I Want You Back," Hotsnax's "Tears of A Clown," Salaam Remi's "ABC," Easy Mo Bee's "Just My Imagination," and Green Lantern's "Mary Jane"—either fail miserably or seem extraneous. Unfortunately, no one tackled two of the most easily bridgeable songs between the Motown era and today's dance culture: "Love Hangover" and "Got to Give It Up." Still,

Motown Remixed does confirm that you can't go wrong with Smokey's "Quiet Storm" or Stevie's "Signed, Sealed, Delivered," and that Edwin Starr's "War" will (sadly) always be relevant.

Mayfield: Remixed is a slightly more noble undertaking—for all his greatness, Curtis remains somewhat slept on, while Motown's legacy has been endlessly pimped by everything from *The Big Chill* to neo-soul to Michael McDonald. But the album, while ambitious, is hit or miss.

Once again, the best track is one of the artist's least-known songs (Ashley Beedle's fist-pumping "Do Do Wap is Strong in Here"). The remixers here show a willingness to experiment, but the results vary: Louie Vega's Latinized "Superfly" is smooth and sexy, but lacks the punch of Mayfield's version, which was already "superbad, supercool;" Mixmaster Mike's "Pusherman" transforms the coke jag of the original into a deadly razor-blade-and-PCP cocktail; Blaze is extinguished by the impossible-to-improve-on "Freddie's Dead"; King Britt's "Little Child Running Wild" is tragically weighted down with ambient trip-hop washes; Grandmaster Flash deftly mixes Chi-town two-step and D.C. go-go on "We're A Winner"; Maurice Joshua tacks on far too many bells and whistles to "Don't Worry"; and Eric Kupper's "Move On Up" adds four-on-the-floor beats to Curtis' strident falsetto vocals and comes up with a soulful, if by-the-numbers, deep house track.

It's evident that all the remixers on both albums have reverence for the original stuff, yet they rarely go beyond the superficial or predictable in trying to update it. Perhaps the old axiom remains true: if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Eric K. Arnold

COMP REVIEWS

MOTOWN REMIXED
Motown/US/CD

MAYFIELD: REMIXED
Rhino/US/CD



MARC ROMBOY: SYSTEMATIC SESSIONS VOL. 1

Systematic/GER/CD
New labels looking to make a splash would do well to emulate *Systematic Sessions*. Compile the best from some hotly tipped 12"s along with tracks from sympathetic artists and mix under the guiding hand of an assured DJ/selector into a massive two-disc salvo. Here, Marc Romboy delves deep into Systematic's electro-house world by focusing on relentlessly dirty house beats, sonic variety, and a day/night tone split. On the first disc, Sthim Sound Machine's micro vocal edits and buzzing hard drive-error bassline evolve into John Tejada's cavernous "Mono On Mono," which splits into individual blips before revolving into the Teutonic shuffle of Samim and Michal's poplock-inducing "Dirty Big Mouse." By the second disc, things get darker until the one-two punch of Dirt Crew's glam-stomp acid bleeds into the rubber bounce of Justin Kohncke's "Elan," closing out the two-hour set in a state of graceful hedonism. *Rob Geary*



-40: CANADIAN PROPAGANDA FILMS OF THE '40S

Cocosolidciti/CAN/CD-DVD
"Mothers of England/We Canadians speak to you from across the sea," booms the narrator of Canadian propaganda film *Children From Across The Sea*, "Send your children out to us/We'll see to it that they're safe and happy;" "The ice cream is bigger, better and cheaper," concurs an English child, "That makes a big difference." The National Film Board of Canada's black and white 1940s shorts would be captivating in their original form, but are even more so on -40, where they get reworked by 20 audio and visual artists. The likes of Akufen, DJ Dopey, and Knifehandchop (audio) and Nadia Duguay, Creatix, and Martin Lalonde (video) reconfigure the remarkable source material to (inadvertently or otherwise) prompt pertinent questions about propaganda and national identity. Fascinating and timely. *David Hemingway*



4 WOMEN NO CRY

Monika Enterprise/GER/CD
One could immediately jump to the conclusion that this all-female, post-techno comp is very "motherly." However, the roughly 15 minutes given to the four international artists here all evade such a generalization. Tusia "TBA" Beridze simmers voices and melodies in the ether; her keyboard ballad, "Late," is full of missed notes and false starts, yet is immaculate. Rosario Blefari

lets her songs get lost in recordings, both real and mimicked, of street bustle. Eglantine Gouzy wanders into a playroom cluttered with music boxes—except for the "Who here is on their honeymoon, tonight?" lounge serenading of "Zone A." And then there is Catarina Pratter's "Policeman," a sublime digital-dub trance that summarizes the high class and intelligence of *4 Women No Cry* at a time when so much electronic culture seeks nothing above the shoulders. *Cameron Macdonald*

AFRICA REMIX

Milan/US/CD
Here we have the sound of New Afrika, a land in perpetual transition, yet one that seems to recognize the value of history at all times. The selections offered here are all fairly recent (the oldest track is from 1998), and highly fusionist—you'll find Xhosa dancehall, Senegalese-Cuban jazz, Kenyan rap, Afro-Arabian folk, Malian down-tempo, and Congolese electro-garage. Yet for all the benefits of modern technology, the most compelling aspects of these rhythmic safaris are the most ancient and traditional. The breadth and the scope of this compilation is impressive; well-known artists like Mory Kante, Youssou N'Dour, Thomas Mapfumo, Orchestre Baobab, and Oumou Sangare are placed next to relative unknowns like Awilo Longomba, Ghorwane, Thandiswa Mazwai, and Kandia Kouyate. Though it's not possible to encompass an entire continent in 16 songs, *Africa Remix* comes close. *Eric K. Arnold*

AFRICANISM III

Tommy Boy/US/CD
French club kids have been gyrating to these house remixes of African music for a couple of years now and Tommy Boy has kindly brought them Stateside. The vintage 1976 Afrobeat hit "Kalimbo" proves that disco can be as raw as the morning after an all-night fucking spree. DJ Bob Sinclair mixes KC Flightt's accapella version of The Police's "Voices Inside My Head" with nimble funk guitars to good effect. The album overall is a bit cartoonish: synth steel drums and cornball booty-slapping lyrics left me picturing people in loud shirts dancing wildly on a Carnival cruise ship. *Ben Bush*

AI RECORDS: SAMPLER-2000-2005

Ai/UK/CD
Ai is that rare sort of electronic label: by defying or simply ignoring musical genres, it has become the arbiter of a certain sound. This sampler, gathered from Ai's catalogue circa '00-'05, provides examples of exactly why the imprint has garnered such critical acclaim—its music runs the gamut from deep, epic techno to warped breakbeat, electro, experimental noise, and ambient pop. Every track is a standout, so there's no point in singling one or two out—suffice it to say that fans of good, solid electronic music, whether it be on the dancefloor or at home, will find plenty to like, indeed *love*, in this fine compilation. *Alex Posell*

BEBEL GILBERTO REMIXED

Six Degrees/US/CD
With Gilberto's first album, *Tanto Tempo*, remixed, it's unsurprising that her second should get the same treatment. Here, Gilberto (from Brazilian bossa royalty) again shows vocal versatility with help from remixers like DJ Spinna and Thievery Corporation (who turn in the restrained and outstanding "Cada Beijo"). In the hands of Latin Project, "Aganju" goes from its African-influenced original to a lounge-ready groove; Spiritual South less successfully takes the song into beat-heavy, more mechanized territory. Gilberto still hasn't matched her excellent first album—but it's (mostly) a pleasure to hear her try. *Luciana Lopez*

BREAKBEAT SCIENCE EXERCISE 5: MIXED BY CLEVER

Breakbeat Science/US/CD
Crazed mobs haven't yet crammed Comiskey Park yet to set flame to stacks of Metalheadz wax—but amongst the downturn in dance music as of late, drum & bass has arguably fallen the farthest and the fastest. A shame, as there are a few brave souls out there (like NYC's Clever) holding it down for the polyrhythmic ingenuity the genre was initially known for. While this mix plays it safer than Clever's *Troubled Waters* disc of last year, there are still numerous standouts—the lithe rhyme style of Beans hitting on every other beat of Graphic's "I Am Metal" and the insect-like skitter of Ezekiel Honig's "Love Session," among others. *Brock Phillips*

COLD HEAT: HEAVY FUNK: RARITIES 1968-1974 VOL. 1

Now Again/US/CD
So far, Now Again has done a badass job of scouring the cellars and attics of the nation on the quest for long lost and forgotten sides of garage funk and soul. And with enough cold-blooded funk to make the meanest, sharpest pimp drop his Yankee Doodle stingy brim, this compilation follows tradition. There are enough tape hiss-heavy scorchers by L.A. Carnival, Carleen & The Groovers, Amnesty, and others to fill that black hole in your soul. Only flaw: NA's hot recent single—the

Detroit Sex Machines' "Rap It Together/Funky Crawl"—is noticeably absent. *Rico "Superbizzee" Washington*

DAVE CLARKE: WORLD SERVICE 2

Resist/UK/CD
Opening a mix with a female chanting "I want to fuck you" might not be the most original idea in 2005. Then again, there's not much that the extremely versatile U.K. super-DJ/producer Dave Clarke hasn't done over his nearly 20-year DJ career. Although his disc, labeled "electro," doesn't actually offer electro until one-third of the way in, Clarke delivers a satisfying, big-room club experience throughout both of these high-energy sets. Old-school Clarke fans will appreciate the much stronger techno CD, with 4/4 faves like Joey Beltram and Heiko Laux whipping up Clarke's usual blistering tempo on the dancefloor. *Janet Tzou*

EARTH: LEGACY OF DISSOLUTION

No Quarter/US/CD
No Quarter—the label reissuing Seattle-based stasis-metal project Earth's notorious live album, *Sunn Amps and Smashed Guitars*—further celebrates the ambient/doom metal group with remixes. Earth's songs are geodes: unevenly textured and densely gilded, they're self-contained wonders formed through a pressurized gauntlet. Even Godflesh and Sabbath quiver. Earth's core, Dylan Carlson, has handpicked six producers—Mogwai, Russell Haswell, Jim O'Rourke, Autechre (who create, oddly, the most rhythmically "rock" remix), Justin Broadrick, and SunnO)) (once an Earth tribute band)—who understand hum, delay, and decay can matter as much, if not more, than any note. Mosaic constellations of white dwarves, the remixes of Earth are like trudging mournfully through pixilated, crystallized supernova remnants, and would make the Melvins and Fennesz proud. *Tony Ware*

GRIME 2

Rephlex/UK/CD
The age-old compilation conundrum, not surprisingly of little concern to the headstrong Rephlex massive: to provide an overreaching summation of the matter at hand (London's grime scene) or to hyper focus the lens on atom-splitting specifics? Choosing the latter, a scant three artists showcase their bass (Kode 9, Loefah, and Digital Mystikz), all linked through their attentive awareness to the nuances of urban music and their seductively sly sublimation of those polished sounds. Jiggy Eastern-fetishizing hip-hop, *smooth* acoustic guitar-strumming R&B, and the precision bass blasts of jungle all echo engrossingly throughout the nine tracks. As a scene-specific glimpse, conundrum solved. Verdict: essential. *Brion Paul*

JONKANOOO

Greensleeves/UK/CD
Fifteen artists chat lyrics over a recycled dancehall beat in this latest one-rhythm-supports-an-entire-album compilation from reggae-specialists Greensleeves. This time 'round, famous (Sean Paul, Beenie Man) and not-so-famous lyricists (Looga Man, Kim Kartina) share the marquee with Donovan "Vendetta" Bennett's Jonkanoo riddim. Jonkanoo is the African-inspired Christmas celebration in which revelers parade through the streets dressed in masquerade, but here the word means bashment revelry, which is precisely what this uptempo arrangement delivers on "Frame I and I." In the track, Beenie explains why it wasn't him who murdered Jamaica's most famous dancer, Bogle. It's an I'm-not-guilty plea you can get jiggy to. *Araya Crosskill*

NEW ZEALAND IN DUB

Echo Beach/NZ/CD
These are the sounds of paradise. On this nearly 80-minute compilation, some of New Zealand's top instrumentalists show us how they seamlessly meld elements of reggae, downbeat, trip-hop, and more to deliver an entirely fresh take on dub—straight out of one of the southernmost countries on the planet. Surely the lush and remote NZ environment helped inspire the inherent tranquility of these selections. And amid the chill vibe of these instrumentals, the occasional use of vocals (on "Politician," for example) proves that these sharp New Zealanders are far from being socially unaware. *Max Herman*

PRIMA NORSK 3

Beatservice/NOR/CD
Documenting the emerging space-disco revival in Oslo, Norway, *Prima Norsk 3* brings some of the scene's brightest lights into focus. Doc L Junior's "Sentimental Breakdown" is a dreamy, outer-limits epic laden with lush strings, towering arpeggios, and funk-out basslines, while Prins Thomas' remix of Legotrip's "Må Vi Stoppe" is a thumping, reverberating disco classic. Lindbaek and Lindstrom's "Aliens In My Pocket" hints at the Italo side of things, and Kohib's "Truger" might make you feel as if you're sweating at The Gallery, 30 years later. If this is what

the Norse are doing with disco, wait 'til they get their hands on rock and roll. Oh wait, they already have... *Alex Posell*

PUTUMAYO PRESENTS MALI

Putumayo/US/CD
Let's just admit that—with its slogan "Guaranteed to make you feel good!"—Putumayo isn't exactly synonymous with street cred. Most of this album is exactly what you'd expect: a lilting major chord fest with shaker percussion. However, the group Tinariwen, formed by Tuareg nomads living in Libyan refugee camps and fighting against Mali's government, has all the mattress-spring percussive force of early Wilson Pickett. In one of the album's more surprising moments, Issa Bagayogo—a traditional lute player with an incredible voice—contributes a club hit describing how hospitals need to take good care of the sick—backed by a surging discotheque beat. *Ben Bush*

REGGAE HITS 34

Jet Star/UK/CD
Volume 34 of this ongoing series is strong on quality, featuring "Imagination," Beenie Man, and Devonte's sprightly re-cut of the "Everybody Needs Love" rhythm, newcomer Fantan Mojah's pertinent "Hungry," Hero's moving "Ina De Ghetto," Turbulence's hip-hop infused "Notorious," rising star Mr. Perfect's "Handcart Boy," Sizzla's heartfelt "Ain't Gonna See Us Fall," and the inspired "Unconditional Love" from German toaster Gentleman. The rest, though, is a confusing mixed bag of slushy love songs, gospel reggae, and hardcore ragga. A bonus CD has great highlights from earlier issues, tracing hits from Sugar Minott's "Herbman Hustling" to Buju's cut of "Ring The Alarm." *David Katz*



LONDON SOUL

Unisex/UK/CD
Walking into the Co-Op Club in 2000 and hearing DJ sets by Seiji and Deigo, followed by vocal trio BB Boogie live, opened up new dimensions of British soul for my ears, having previously known only acid jazz and trip-hop artists such as Soul II Soul and Jhelisa. Needless to say, London is a city where things never slow down, and neither does their indigenous take on soul and R&B, which Unisex provides a thorough primer on here. You'll hear the broken side of things (Bugz In The Attic, Alex Attias, 4hero), modern (and distinctively British) R&B (Omar, Lewis Taylor, Romina Johnson, D'Neil), and soul that defies category (Sunburst Band, Alice Russell, Vanessa Freeman) with the common thread being lyrical sincerity and novel song arrangements. But don't expect starched shirts and polished leather loafers—this is emotional, back-up-singers-wailing, make-you-sing-the-hook quality soul music, the kind we'd be hearing a lot more of in the U.S. if American radio wasn't under a corporate thumb. Unlike London, things probably won't change Stateside anytime soon, so be satisfied with this excellent overview. *Tomas Palermo*



THE ROUGH GUIDE TO DUB

World Music Network/UK/CD
 You need a *Rough Guide* to help you get through the Alps on \$100, but do you need one to help you pick out dub records? Apparently so, as the travel guide continues its foray into music compilations with this sampler. Props go to compilation selector Steve Barrow for starting things off with Errol Thompson and Randy Chin's All Stars, a brilliant, somewhat unique commentary on music production that incorporates stage tech chatter into a take on Lloyd Parkes' "Ordinary Man." Overall, this compilation is a Tubby-dominated mixture that also features "Satta Dread Dub," an early Aggrovators dub by "Prince" Phillip Smart of HC&F Studio fame, a few Channel One mixes, and a pair of tunes from Prince Jammie. *Jesse Serwer*



RUB 'N' TUG PRESENTS CAMPFIRE

Eskimo/BEL/CD
 Note to self: in the search for art, never forget the craft. This compilation from the Rub 'N' Tug team (DJs Thomas and Eric

Duncan) has plenty of solid, unusual, downright freaky tracks, but the mix itself is painfully annoying. While the last thing the world needs is yet another seamlessly mixed CD, slamming On The House's "Pleasure Control" recklessly into Double Fantasy's "Heartbreaker" and then layering feedback over the track before randomly cutting the volume is just irritating. Songs like Daniel Wang's rollicking disco romp "Silver Belt" and the classic acid of Adonis and Charles B's chugging "Lack of Love" simply deserve better. *Peter Nicholson*

SAFE TRAVEL

Pressure Sounds/UK/CD
 A contemporary of Bunny Lee and Lee "Scratch" Perry, underrated producer Phil Pratt recorded wonderful rocksteady gems but issued them in limited quantity on scarce Jamaican 45s. This cherry-picked compilation collects his greatest and rarest shots with legendary figures such as Ken Boothe, Horace Andy, and The Clarendonians, plus forgotten artists like Hemsley Morris, The Cool Cats, and The Thrillers. Some tracks were unfortunately mastered from such badly worn vinyl that it ruins the listening experience, but the music itself is timeless and faultless. *David Katz*

SPECTRAL SOUND V.1

Spectral/US/CD
 As a home listening experience, the first disc of Spectral's label sampler is blandly repetitive—these cuts are clearly intended as tools to be placed in the hands of a DJ and used to good effect. Ryan Elliott ably illustrates this point on the second disc, where he remixes 33 tracks from the Ghostly subsidiary. While the unmixed tracks seem to go in endless circles, they gain a sense of direction in the context of Elliott's set, which makes beats more intricate by layering them, then sullyng them with indecipherable vocal samples. Put together, *Spectral Sound v.1* is an instructional jockey kit. *Ben Bush*

SUPERPITCHER: TODAY

Kompakt/GER/CD
 Aksel Schaufler's own strain of Köln techno has (half-jokingly) been dubbed "micro goth" and a slightly doleful sense of gothic melodrama prevails on his recent mix album *Today*. Schaufler compiles with a moodiness that suggests he's plotting raves in his hometown's magnificent cathedral rather than the substantially smaller Studio 672 (where Kompakt actually hosts their weekly club night). Lawrence and Wighnomy Bros feature as track creators and re-constructors while Michael Mayer's "Lovefood (Matias Aguayo Mix)" and The Psychonauts' "World Keeps Turning (Highfish & Zander Remix)" accentuate the ambience of tragi-romanticism. As a finale, Sebastien Tellier's exquisite "La Ritournelle" is lovingly reclaimed from its creator's quite ridiculous *Politics* album. *David Hemingway*

TRAX CLASSIX: JOEY BELTRAM

Trax/US/CD
 Building on the success of its *20th Anniversary Collection* triple-CD set, the Trax label is now revisiting the vaults and creating compendiums of individual artists. Armando and Joey Beltram are up first, and each of their singles collections makes a convincing argument that they were the prime architects of the mid-'90s dance explosion. Beltram has always laid down brainy but hard-nosed techno, and his CD gathers many strong singles, like "Life Force" and "Gravitate." But the better of the two discs collects the smooth and sleazy sounds of the late, great Armando. A regular at Chicago's Warehouse club while still in high school, he gave his music a more funky acid edge, flavoring it with Latin percussion. Though they lack the bite of later productions, tracks like "Get Crazy" have obviously influenced the squelching sound of groups like Hardfloor. *Patrick Sisson*

WICKEDJAZZSOUNDS

United/NETH/CD
 With this 14-track compilation, Amsterdam's WickedJazzSounds collective lays out its saucy, funk-fueled mission statement. DJ Phil Horneman displays typical Dutch opportunism in his selections, skimming only the thickest, freshest stuff off the top of a worldwide bowl of slick, floor-greasing grooves. The *jazz* in the title relates more to organic, free-swinging arrangements than a particular era or style of music; recent classics like The Herbaliser's "Something Wicked This Way Comes" and Mark de Clive-Lowe's "State of the Mental" strut alongside this-minute jazz/funk bangers by Quantic and Platinum Pied Pipers, and even a sunny throwback by the Godfather himself. WickedJazzSounds = Ubiquity van Nederland? *Jonathan Zwickel*



VALERIE TREBELJAHR OF LALI PUNA

LALI PUNA: I THOUGHT I WAS OVER THAT (RARE, REMIXED AND B-SIDES)

Morr Music/GER/CD
 The music of Munich's Lali Puna (featuring The Notwist's seemingly ubiquitous Markus Acher) is like being teased with a rabbit fur flogger: there's a snap to the Teutonically informed electro-pop, but any impact is far more supple than unsettling. And Lali Puna's last album, *Faking The Books*, was a real looker. So can you improve on the chirping goodness? No. But artists including Bomb The Bass (a skulking highlight), Boom Bip, Two Lone Swordsmen (crunchy), Sixtoo, Alias, Dntel (another, bouncier highlight), and To Rococo Rot reinterpret the songs as melodic lopes both rubbery and rigid, at times dubby and others blunted. Throw in a smattering of jittery b-sides ("40 Days" and "Together in Electric Dreams" being tops) and purring, Lali Puna-composed remixes (for Boom Bip, Dntel, the Swordsmen) and you've got a collection of pleasantly dawdling vignettes—not as vivacious as the steady jangle of *Faking The Books*, but worth a flick or three. *Tony Ware*

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HOUSE GUEST REVIEWS: S.U.M.O.

Stockholm can often be a cold place, with severe winds whipping off the North Sea and dour financial barons walking the streets wearing navy blazers and scowls. Nevertheless, Swedish duo S.U.M.O. shines a spot of sunshine on their corner of Scandinavia with a humorous name and warm 'n' huggable house tracks. Formed in 2000 by DJ Alf Tumble and jazz head Combo, S.U.M.O. (which stands for Swedish Underferd Music Operators) first came to the world's attention with releases on Trackmode and Seasons Recordings. Afro-Latin-tinged hits like "Wintersong" (for Bob Sinclar's Africanism/Yellow imprint), "Samba Consumo," and "Supra Sumo" soon followed, as well as the formation of S.U.M.O. Sessions, a live act where they combine their DJ skills with live vocals and instrumentation from the likes of percussionist Thomas Eby and Ugandan singer/bass player Sammy Kasule. The boys recently released *Rebounces* (Heya Hifi), an album of remixes they've done for the likes of Robert Owens, Trüby Trio, and Jazztronik, and they rang from their Heya Studios to let us in on the fattest house tunes. *Saffron Reeves* www.heyahifi.com

WAGON COOKIN '70S SAMBA Lovemonk/SPA/12

During the last year, Lovemonk has become one of the most interesting Spanish house labels. As a follow-up to last year's praised album, *Everyday Life*, Wagon Cookin decided to bring the whole band into the studio to deliver a samba workout. A sweet blend of '70s electronic sounds and organic instruments, this one is live and jazzy, but still with a good punch. *S.U.M.O.*

HENRIK SCHWARZ LEAVE MY HEAD ALONE BRAIN Sunday Music/GER/12

This guy has such a tasteful sound: deep and dirty, but at the same time intelligent and damn funky. This fantastically titled fifth release on his Sunday Music imprint is a bassline-driven track with a dubby touch, topped with a sweet vocal hook and weird old samples. *Gourmet. S.U.M.O.*

POVO HI FLY Raw Fusion/SWE/12

Let's get jazzy with the latest EP from Danish jazz duo Povo on Swedish favorite Raw Fusion. Title track "Hi Fly" is a solid follow-up to club killer "East on West." Following this funky cut for the floor is the flipside, which holds a slick remake of "You Are" from Italy's finest, Nicola Conte. *S.U.M.O.*

ILIJA RUDMANN & VOTEKK SUNSET ROUGE

Grab/US/12
Look out for Croatians Rudmann and Votekk—their debut on Grab offers rich, melody-soaked electrohouse numbers, sleek deep house, and even a Freerange Recordings-style broken beat track. The tracks dip and turn like a surfer cutting and slashing a Santa Cruz wave break. And, like producers Dixon or Atjazz, the duo's rainbow of sounds and instrumentation is energetic and expertly rendered. *Hector Cedillo*

THE EMPEROR MACHINE VERTICAL TONES AND HORIZONTAL NOISE WHITE LIGHT CIRCUS MARCHING ORDERS DC/UK/12

The latest from Emperor Machine—a project from Andy Meecham (of the trio Chicken Lips)—is a two-part 12" series entitled "Vertical Tones and Horizontal Noise," wherein the man traverses prog and Kraut territories whilst reeling in the Idjuts for some badass remix duties on "Front Man." Meanwhile, CL partner Dean Meredith welcomes us to his punk funk White Light Circus, where he walks a tightrope of dub, NY artrock, and disco sounds. *Roy Dank*

ECHOLOGIST ECHOLOGY King Street/US/12

Though using less organic instrumentation than in his Beat Pharmacy project, Brendon "Ecologist" Moeller serves up a nice variation on a never-too-old theme. With its Mood II Swing stabs and tribal/dub-oriented beats, "Ecology" is not your typical 4/4-smasher, but an aural experience. The 3AM Mix of "Dub-Minded" works magnificently on a large soundsystem and features an early morning mood reminiscent of Danny Tenaglia's more experimental sets. *Scott Edmonds*

JENCE SICKNESS

COLLECTOR 82

MARC ROMBOY JACK IS BACK

Systematic/GER/12
Another sureshot for quality electrohouse is Marc Romboy's Systematic imprint. Newcomer Jence ups the ante with "Sickness," sounding like Gary Glitter crashing a Japanese drama, while the pounding "Fitness" features sawtooth synths and a slight Can influence. Leave it to Romboy himself to come out on top with his "Good Life" synth hits and full-on Chicago revivalism, not to mention the deep tech Dirt Crew remix on the flip. *Mike Battaglia*

PALM SKIN PRODUCTIONS SO BAD

Freerange/UK/12
Go ahead, poke fun at my age because I remember buying Palm Skin EPs on Mo' Wax and Pussy Foot. But believe me, young whippersnapper—despite a four-year hiatus Mr. Skin is worth a few moments of your precious time. Electrohouse and dirty disco with more bounce than the tennis balls on my Zimmer frame ever had. *Franz Carr*

DJ T. RISING M.A.N.D.Y. VS BOOKA SHADE BODY LANGUAGE

Get Physical/GER/12
Germany's unstoppable Get Physical label moves into "minimal" territory with these two 12"s of maximum dancefloor potential. "Body Language" stays overtly melodic but with plenty of space for its grooves to move, while T. crafts one of his most subtle burners to date, with handclaps and subbass increasing in intensity until liftoff. "Galaga," meanwhile, is as shimmering and exquisitely funky as anything in the label's back catalog. If this is Physical's future, bring it on! *Mike Battaglia*

SOLID GOLD PLAYAZ MY LIFE... PT. 01

Kanzeramt/GER/12

Our ears are so unaccustomed to hearing real funk in electronic music that we sometimes miss authenticity. Setting off a basement jam alert, Kenny Gino and Big Mike shift our attention to a sexier side of house music with this release—a fresher and rawer realization than the normal fluff one hears. Not to be dismissed as pop, these tracks are made for the dancefloor. *Scott Edmonds*

BARFLY THIS AIN'T THE PLACE

Coco Machete/US/12
STRANGER OVER HER UNDER
Grayhound/US/12
Based on the amount of killer disco-dub singles he's got circulating, no one would guess that Rong Records co-owner and Deep Fuzz/Triangle Orchestra member Ben Cook has been sequestered in outer Sacramento, California getting his advanced sound design degree. "This Ain't The Place" and "Over Her Under" are perhaps two of his finest to date. Live bass and guitar and a circa-'81 downtown NY funk attitude propel tracks that sound as if A Certain Ratio or Fatback were jamming at a house party. *Tomas*

BASLINE ROAD YOU WILL FIND IT

KELVIN K POUNDLAND PIMPIN EP
Nordic Trax/CAN/12
This Vancouver label's top tier underground status is confirmed via two excellent singles: Colorado duo Baseline Road's raw dub-funk and Kelvin K's gritty, Rhodes-soloing tracks. Baseline Road (also of Deep House Soldiers fame) employs handclaps, conga riffs, and electric bass over moody-but-sexy slow and low 4/4 disco rhythms. Moulton vet Kelvin brings that famed SF studio's sound to his new Brighton, UK digs on a smooth, propulsive, and jazzy gem. *Derek Grey*

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TECHNO GUEST REVIEWS: MAGDA

Born in Poland, raised in Detroit, and inspired by New York and Berlin (where she currently resides), Magda has explored many angles of techno. Her sets show a worldly influence, zinging between stripped-down minimalism, classic electro influences, and melodic, emotive microhouse. Tutored under the North American kings of bleep, Dan Bell and Claude Young, Magda eventually found a kindred spirit in Plus 8/Minus' Richie Hawtin. Since 1999, the pair has toured the world together, with Magda's asymmetrical rhythms and blip-filled soul perfectly complementing Hawtin's at times harsh machine pounding. Magda's also stepped out on her own, helping found Detroit's influential Women on Wax collective, collaborating with Traum DJ/producer Dinky, and making tunes for Minus and Telegraph as one-third of Run Stop Restore (alongside Troy "Slacknoise" Pierce and Marc Houle). With a solo EP and DJ mix forthcoming on Minus and a new label called Underline with Pierce, there's no stopping Magda's rock. We caught up with her hours after she cleared the German border, and asked her what to play next. *Vivian Host*
www.rsr.com/magda, www.m-nus.com

MATT JOHN APFELSINUS Perlon/GER/12

Matt is one of my favorite new producers. His nasty business for Perlon boosts classic jacking minimalism with some warped funk. Sparse or driving, the tracks are filled with layers of rich sounds and deliver perfect hooks. The continuously building and catchy melody in "The Rising Scope" will leave you snaking all the way down the block. *Magda*

TROY PIERCE RUN Minus/CAN/12

From the schizophrenic snares in "Horsenation" to the mischievous melody in "Girl Down By The River," Troy slaps you right in the face with his dirty, twisted beats. The creepy vocals by Heartthrob and always changing bleeps and fills make you feel like doing something you shouldn't. *Magda*

RYAN CROSSON SAY SO Trapez/GER/12

Here is another new talent who will definitely leave his mark this year. His 16th-note shuffle beats and low basslines crawl under your skin like little bugs. Tracks like "Cold Feet" and "Painter's Day" have such a great swing that you feel like your body is subconsciously being pulled in every direction. *Magda*

AFX ANALORD EP 6 & 7

Rephlex/UK/12
Aphex Twin's wicked grin and yellow-eyed glare beams forth from each of his latest gleeful analog electronic slabs. Like an aural expletive lobbed at all the pointy-shoe '80s fetishists and their limp synth pop rehashings, tracks like "Pitcard," "Snivel Chew," and "Afx Acid 4" contain equal amounts of dissonant audacity and sheer technical genius. AFX's ancient machines cough up some fascinating techno ghosts. *Derek Grey*

MISKATE LIL'TUGTUG

Microcosm/US/12
LANDESVATTER MOVE EP
Parotic/US/12
These singles offer a snapshot of minimal techno by a pair of emerging talents. Philadelphia's (Mis)Kate Iwanowicz opts for glitchy vocal samples laid over either rigid or tipsy digital beats. Her playful sonic textures and emphatic rhythms are an ideal soundtrack to our anxious, accelerated times. By contrast, Berlin's Joachim Landesvatter's velvety techno is sparse, relying on rapidly evaporating synth loops and condensed percussion without sacrificing any complexity. *Derek Grey*

MAMBOTUR EL CAPITAN

Multicolor/GER/12
On "Vamos Viendo," the previous single from techno fusionists Mambotur (Chile's Pier Bucci and Venezuela's Argenis Brito), Latin vocals and melodies met German club techno head on (think Monolake meets cumbia). For their latest, fellow Chilean Dinky guides "El Capitan" over tranquil but overcast seas of minimal rhythm. Perhaps her remix inspired Bucci to throw in his own robust acid mix to rock the boat a little. *Tomas*



DRUM & BASS GUEST REVIEWS: J MAJIK

By the age of 15, J Majik (born Jamie Spratling) had already DJed his first rave and had started producing with Lemon D, Dillinja, and Goldie. Two years later, his pioneering slice of dark breakbeat mayhem, "Your Sound," premiered on Metalheadz and he kickstarted his own label, Infrared. Now 28, Mr. Majik has plenty of other milestones under his belt, having recorded for Mo' Wax and become famous for bringing the house and disco influence into d&b, via such tracks as "Space Invaders" and "Love Is Not A Game" featuring diva Kathy Brown. Working with new partners in crime Wickaman and Future Bound, he continues to release a volley of what he calls "energy tunes," including "Now It's Over," "Raging Bull," and "Ska Disco." You can check these out on his recent *Red Alert* mix CD, or peep what he's playing below. *Star Eyes*
www.infraredrecords.co.uk

PENDULUM SLAM Breakbeat Kaos/UK/12

After some signature Pendulum "space talk," the track surprises you as it goes into 32 bars of groundbreaking hip-hop before frantically winding up and dropping into a next level rinse-out. With its quality catchy riff too, it could be big enough to top "Another Planet." Time will tell. *JM*

TC LET'S GO Valve/UK/12

After a whole host of quality R&B-inspired bootlegs comes TC's first release on Valve and it's a monster. The bass is ridiculous, really heavy stuff, whilst the bongos work well keeping the momentum going. Lovin' all his little vocal touches as well, and the mixdown is something to be applauded too. *JM*

DUO INFERNALE POSITIVE VIBES Under Construction/UK/12

After a whole host of labels fought over this one, I finally received a test press from DogsOnAcid and I'm told it's coming out on their Under Construction imprint. Love the musical atmospheric intro that drops into a lovely reggae-influenced bassline accompanied by switching drum programming. Works everytime. *JM*

GREMLINZ + STRANGER + VISIONARY

THE CURSE
Obscene/UK/12
"The Curse"'s bongo-laden riddims, dub bass stabs, and dark synth motifs mirror life in a claustrophobic urban jungle—a sound originated by artists like Dillinja, Lemon D, and Shy FX. No complaints here—this a classic, funky, future-hewn d&b tune that never bores. *DJ Chopper*

THE UPBEATS WEREWOLF

BC/UK/12
A sampler from *JEIB(Presents Bad Taste*, The Upbeats' "Werewolf" is transformational horror movie music. The track builds from a foggy atmosphere into a lumbering long-nailed monster, exploding with shrieking cymbals and thundering kicks. Body & Soul's "My Dues" offers sci-fi soul drenched in layered synths, cyclical bass notes, and rolling drum patterns. Side A may beat you down, but B&S' B-side gem will lift you back up. *DJ Chopper*

CALIBRE DOMERON

Critical/UK/12
Critical captures more Calibre craftsmanship on this fine tuned release. "Domeron"'s lofty bass rolls over slapping breaks, faint female vocals, and high-pitched horns to minimal yet infectious effect. The flip, "Maximus," is a more upbeat affair with its sweeping strings and bouncy bass hops. Calibre proves once again that less can be more. *Ryan Romana*

GOLDIE SAY YOU LOVE ME

Metalheadz/UK/12
We welcome back Goldie as he turns back the clock to '95. Washed away synth pads lead this mental tune through clanking breaks and razor sharp b-lines in classic Metalheadz fashion. The fast rising Skitty develops more musical noise on "Sith Print" by shuffling eerie, unsettling samples with the perfect puncturing bass stabs. *Ryan Romana*

SEBA & PARADOX PLANET STARS

Freak/UK/12
Seba & Paradox have stuck to their drum-driven guns from day one and are finally getting the recognition they deserve. The duo builds momentum on "Planet Stars" with twisting amen edits, floor dropping bass, and vengeful vocal snippets, while Middle Eastern flavors run throughout the percussive beat down of "Kali." *Ryan Romana*

ALPHACUT VOLUME 4

Alphacut/GER/12
MURDERBOT FI YOU
Mashit/US/12
Alphacut's four producers make d&b that mixes breakcore's reckless abandon with Photek's precision drum sounds. MZE's "Waterboy" sounds like the Jungle Drummer getting busy on some soup kettles. Kansas City's Murderbot is one of the US's leading ragga jungle producers and "Fi You" blends Waterhouse vocals samples with rattling amens. Headz who'll play anything from Luke Vibert's Plug to Congo Natty plates should check these two inventive discs. *DJ Chopper*

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Teve James

HIP-HOP GUEST REVIEWS: OHMEGA WATTS

Milton Campbell (alias Ohmega Watts) has designed visuals for Pigeon John, Adidas, and Ubiquity, but perhaps his best design is his debut album, *The Find*, out September 13 on Ubiquity. Over 21 tracks, Campbell gets confessional *and* cinematic, channeling Eric B & Rakim, Pete Rock, and Shuggie Otis with sunshine soul licks and rare groove-driven numbers about digging: both in the crates and spiritually. This Portland, Oregon, resident is already earning rave reviews from Greyboy and Solid Steel's DK for his "That Sound" single, an infectiously hearty party tune featuring plenty of West Coast love (members of The Procussions and The Rebirth guest). And though he was on the road when we came calling, he sent us these reviews from a computer at his local library (no joke!). *Tyra Bangs*
www.ubiquityrecords.com

ONE.BE.LO. UNPARALLELED Fatbeats/US/12

As the track drops, you think classic hip-hop reminiscent of Melle Mel's "The Message," but with a present-day rhyme style. One.Be.Lo spits a rapid yet rhythmic array of lyrics that fit perfectly with the beat and Magestik Legend compliments it as well. Good for coming out of an old school hip-hop set into newer joints, or for creating a chill atmosphere. *Ohmega Watts*

THE IMPOSSEBULLS ONE MAN'S DOPE Slam Jamz/US/7

The A-side on this 7" from Chuck D's label is "One Man's Dope," a subpar track with subpar rhymes; it's not terrible, but it's not my style, and the beat is pretty simplistic—almost like a skeleton track. The B-side, "Psychodelix Holy Ghost" by 7th Octave, has a more upbeat, hip-hop-meets-rock feel circa '91. It's more developed than the flip, but again suffers from subpar rhymes and unoriginal beats. You've heard it all before. *Ohmega Watts*

P.H.E.A.R. AMOUNT TO SOMETHIN ABB/US/12

"Amount To Somethin'" has a beat that sits somewhere between J Dilla and Pete Rock: stabby bass and chopped horns with solid drum movement. It's a butter track by a producer named Mr. Porter; the rhymes are street conscious, telling cats to rise and wisen up. "I Love Her Again" is a smooth B-Side where the MCs point out what they love about hip-hop. Pick this up if you're a fan of Native Tongues, De La, or Pete Rock and CL Smooth. *Ohmega Watts*

ILL POETIC BEYOND

All Ranges of Thought/US/12

IP's steelo is definitely Midwest—the laconic tone of Common and plainspeak verbals of All Natural inform this Cincinnati emcee. And while his laundry list rhyme technique isn't enough to lift the final-8 placer at Scribble Jam above the average, guests like King Solomon (Greens Crew) and Piakhan help sizzle up the "Beyond" remix. "Fly" fares better, a "reminiscing" cut propelled by an uptempo funk-rock sample. *Phil Phloe*

EDO G SHED A TEAR

Fat Beats/US/12

Edo G is the original emo rapper—since the Bostonian released his classic *Life Of A Kid In The Ghetto* (Polygram) he's been shining light on the traumas of black people with a sentimental lens. "Shed A Tear" follows this path with lines like "We the number one target/Grew up in disease without antibiotics/A lot of narcotics/9-11 didn't make me patriotic/I don't believe the sniper's John Muhammed." Edo's not paranoid—just giving voice to the voiceless and power to the people. *Tomas*

LYNN NESS FEAT YESH, L*RONEOUS & SACH

Ain't So Much

New Medina/US/12

Lynn Ness (meaning "For the people" in Arabic) is a South Bay Area producer steeped in the MPC-wrought early '90s sound made famous by Pete Rock, Large Pro, and Stimulated Dummies. Combined with three MCs that been there and done that in rap (Coney Island's Yesh, SF's L*Roneous, and Sach from LA's The Nonce) who add clever wordplay to the project, and the prognosis is already positive. Ness may yet usher in a second "golden era." *Phil Phloe*

LIKWIT JUNKIES ONE DAY AWAY

ABB/US/12

Leave it to these fatalistic LA residents—from a land of freeway shootings and police brutality—to translate that city's tension into hip-hop. On "One Day Away" Defari and Beat Junkie Babu reflect on how daily encounters—from crime to God—are always close to transforming your life forever. I was surprised by the track's shuffling polyrhythmic beat—it's a shift for Babs, who I always considered more a disciple of Primo than Timba. But then things change, don't they? *Big Ray*

EXILE & LOKEY SINKING SHIP

Mixt Ape/US/12

East Coast duo Exile & Lokey trade rhymes back and forth as easily as bootleg *Star Wars* DVDs in Chinatown—their symbiosis on "Sinking Ship" and "The Bridge" seems as much the product of practice as talent. And they got the latter for days—Exile's backing tracks are hearty, guitar-driven jams that sound like later-period Massive Attack, brooding and epic. As lyricists, the two pine nostalgically like Rhymesayers' Slug without sounding trite. And that's the whole point. *Al Boogie*

AMERIE LOVE'S OFF THE CHAIN EP

Promo/US/12

The Lil Jon-produced "Touch" is little more than a tabla riff, an 808 kick, and a handclap—Amerie's singing is almost superfluous; it's a club beat that anybody could be on. That's why you'll hear it incessantly for the next six months. Instead, stick to the duet with Nas, "Man Up2," which is up there with the best Faith or Mary J collabs—a funky, methodical MPC hip-hop loop and killer Am hook. Tight. *Al Boogie*

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BREAKS GUEST REVIEWS: DYLAN RHYMES

No one has bridged the worlds of house and breakbeat better than Marvin Beaver, better known as his musical alter ego, Dylan Rhymes. Since the late '90s, he's brought breaks' toughness and twisted basslines together with house's melodic and acidic overtones, and bounced back and forth between nu-skoool labels (Fingerlickin, Meat Katie's Whole 9 Yards, and Lot 49) and 4/4 imprints like Junior Boys Own and Kingsize. His punchy kicks and dark basslines trot all over tracks like "The Way," "Alright Alright" (with Lee Coombs), March 2005's "Salty," and the Nightbreed EP, which are an apt preparation for the debut album he'll release this fall on Kingsize. We tracked down this elusive breakster—also an erstwhile member of Kerbcrawler (with Quinn Whalley) and La Liga (along with Elite Force and Force Mass Motion), to find out what's rocking the free world. *Vivian Host* www.lot49.com

FORCE MASS MOTION OUT OF IT Lot 49/UK/12

A fantastic track (due out soon on Lot 49) from the best producer out of the prog scene. Force Mass Motion crafts an absolute belting groove with a tech tinge and swelling production. Great sound, great label! *DR*

PMT GYROMANCER REMIXES 10 Kilo/UK/12

An old classic back with a revamp and four mixes to choose from. They're all high-quality versions but I reckon the Stanton Warriors have done a sterling job here, keeping true to the original but also adding their distinctive, pounding sound. A must for the high point in any DJ set. *DR*

DJ ROOSTER SHAKE IT (STEVE ANGELLO REMIX) Juicy Music/US/12

I know this is by no means a new release, but this remix has been a mainstay in every one of my sets. Stripped down old-school acid house that pumps deep and low. Fantastic production that powers over all other house music out there for me. *DR*

DHAMAAL SF TRANSITIONS EP

Surya Vault/US/12
Hot bhangra breaks from SF's leading desi collective. Tracks like the nu-skoool stormer "Twilight Creeper," Maneesh's "Echotwist," or Janaka Selecta and Doctor Das' (Asian Dub Foundation) "Bol Breaker" are spirited dhol bombs built on expert percussion and big soundsystem dynamics. Pure fire. *Tomas*

R-KANE & DOMINO FEAT. KELE LE ROC JESTLER

W/UK/12
Badmen R-Kane and Domino are right on the mark with another vocal banger and the always-on-point Kele Le Roc adds the vocal spice to make this tune a dancefloor success. While all the mixes are quality with big, stonking basslines, the 4/4 version hits like a Mack truck and will smack you upside the head with a kick drum. Bang on. *DeepSix*

CHUNKY JACKSON WHAT YOU DO TO ME

2tuf 4u/UK/12
With two of the dons of the original UK garage scene behind this single, you know you're in store for quality. While Karl "Tuff Enuff" Brown lays down appropriately chunky and bumpy beats to accompany the A-side's very singable tag line, Booker "Kings of Soul" T opts for Spanish guitar and his trademark organs to up the soul factor a notch on the flip. *DeepSix*

DELINQUENT FEAT. SHAD GHETTO QUEEN

Spoilt Rotten/UK/12
The fast-rising Delinquent production team comes with an arrangement that's equal parts pure pop sensibility and straight street soul, giving newcomer Shad's excellent

vocals a perfect place to shine. From the Cali-styled gansta lead lines to the syncopated chord progressions with vocal stabs, Delinquent has crafted a brilliant piece of 2-step. The Wideboys 4x4 remix just adds value to the package. *DeepSix*

OCTOBER BEAT ME 30HZ VS. KRAYMON DRUG NOISE

Vertical/UK/12
Specialists in darker-edged breakbeats that tilt toward sub-low and dubstep, Bristol's Vertical unleashes their sixth and seventh singles. Like an electronic tribute to noise rock band Helmet, October's martial drum syncopation and overdriven D-chord bass rumbles should stoke future mosh pits. 30hz and Kraymon's form of noise is decidedly druggier; a collection of psycho samples that echo infinitely over mammoth breakbeats illuminated by hot bass strobes. *DJ Focus*

LADY FURY FEAT. LADY OOZY TOO MUCH DRUGS

white/UK/12
Grime emcee Fury unleashes a verbal lashing on *di gyal dem roun' di ends* taking drugs while their children languish at home with granddum. She confronts sisters who rely on the system or a man to support them with all the passion of someone who's sincerely trying to change her environment. On the flip, Fury salutes single mothers and ghetto survivors. Thoughtful lyrical ammo over Green Lantern or Alchemist-style rap instrumentals. *Tomas*



FUTURE JAZZ LABEL PROFILE: BASTARD JAZZ

Bastard Jazz is the sound of getting down: soul-tickling basslines by Jugoe, rat-a-tat stand-up snares from DRM, and dreamy, delayed Rhodes by Master Mosquito. Curated since 2001 by the dank duo of Aaron Schultz (pictured above) and Jay Marley, Bastard Jazz initially provided a home for artists from the defunct Shadow Records. Schultz recalls the struggle to get off the ground: "I didn't go out for three months and scrimped on food until I had enough [money] together to make it happen. On the upside, I got a lot of tracks made during that time period and lost about 15 pounds!" Shultz may have gotten skinny, but the beats stayed fat and BJ has been going strong ever since, providing an essential Brooklyn outlet for downbeat sounds alongside kindred spirits like Redbud Recordings and Turntables on the Hudson. Balancing the local and the global, Bastard Jazz follows an EP by Brighton's Mawglee (Tru Thoughts) with a Jugoe 12" featuring remixes by Nickodemus and Beatphreak and a release from MonkOne, "the king crate digger of Brooklyn." *Peter Nicholson* www.bastardjazz.com

TREVOR LOVEYS OUTSIDE IN MAX FRESH LEMON

Loungin/UK/12
Hidden Agenda member turned broken beat Jedi Mark Goodings (known to friends as Max Fresh) has been on a tear with the remixes lately, and dazzles on his *Lemon* album sampler. For Trevor Lovey's latest single (that includes a devastating Sinbad refix), Goodings reassembles "Strange But Not" into a clipped house-meets-rude broken stepper where upright bass alternates with subs and computer noises stream across a Lapis blue digital universe. The album sampler is a smorgasbord of asymmetrical techno and jazzy space disco. *Tomas*

THIEVERY CORPORATION THE HEART'S A LONELY HUNTER (LOUIE VEGA MIX)

ESL/US/12
There's no way this should work. Too many cooks in the kitchen, too many A-listers, too much hype. But f**ck me if Thievery didn't pull it off. David Byrne, Louie Vega and the kings of chill churn out a sunshine-fueled Afrobeat gem. In the immortal words of Colonel John "Hannibal" Smith, head of another A-Team, "I like it when a plan comes together." *Franz Carr*

COLONEL RED, OMAR & SPOONFACE BRUQ STEPPIN'

Faada-UK-12
This is how I like my British soul. Rough around the edges, rude bass lines and next level beats. There's no room on my decks for namby-pamby sickly sweet musings about g-strings or sunsets. Both the Red one and Omar can really sound good on the right tunes, and it's the good Colonel taking the biscuit here. *Franz Carr*

INCOGNITO THE 25TH CHAPTER

Dome/UK/12
Jazz-funk stalwarts Incognito are back for their 25th anniversary, celebrating with another bit of blaxploitation-movie biz that could be anything from their back catalog. Ski Oakenfull's "Broken Funk" remix sounded promising, but is only slightly broken and lacks an edge. You *do* get eight minutes of summertime acid jazz with a syncopated rhythmic foundation and extended soloing, but it leaves one wanting. *Mike Battaglia*

TOMINAGA IT'S YOUR TIME FEAT. ESKA

Diaspora/US/12
Globetrotter Sushi "Tominaga" Chanrai—a producer who plied her trade in Nigeria, India, and her hometown London—brings out the best in vocalist Eska's earnest expressions over punchy 4hero-style strings 'n' things. Middlefield slows the beats into succulent after-hours textures while Alex Attias (a.k.a. Mustang) explores freeform boogie—you've never hear him mash '80s disco house quite like this. Fantastic! *Hector Cedillo*

PHUTURISTIX COHIBA

Phuture Lounge/UK/12
After some key releases for Locked On and Hospital, partners Zed Bias and DJ Injekta return with three perfect future jazz tracks that explore balmy themes and Afro-Latin percussion. Colorful melodic swathes, ocean-drenched Rhodes, elastic synth leads, and bowed strings fashion music for catamaraning across the Caribbean and hopping sea swells while clutching rum in a coconut shell. *Tomas*

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THE DOWN-BEAT DIASPORA

BY RICO "SUPERBIZZEE" WASHINGTON

GETTING YOU UP ON THE SHARPEST SOUL, FUNK, AND R&B

Supercalifunky salutations! Yo, is it just me or did Mama Nature cop a stank Aunt Esther attitude this summer? Even still, seems like her powers proved futile against the art of moving butts. So whether you were dancing up a sandstorm at Miami's Winter Music Conference or baptized in sweat at **Bobbito** and **DJ Spinna's** annual Wonder-Full fête in New York, I trust that it was a lovely affair for one and all. Now let's see what's in the crate.

Looks like **Garth Trinidad's** archeological dig in the Atlantic Records vault has unearthed some real jewels. Sporting commendable reworks from **Sa-Ra** and **King Britt**, *Atlantiquity* (Atlantic/Rhino) flows like a Saturday night shotgun ride in Sweet Daddy Williams' pink Caddy with the gangster white walls. Speaking of Sa-Ra, if you're feenin' for their Ubiquity album and missed out on their Jazzy Sport EPs, peep *Dark Matter & Pornography: Vol. 30*. This mixtape is an aural goodie bag of strange games and funky things that will definitely whet your appetite.

On Track cronies **Kon & Amir** have just cut a slab of wax that will virtually render your 1200s scrap metal! **Skip Jackson's** funky disco overture "Microwave Boogie" finally gets the 12" treatment with a more effects-laden re-edit on the flip side. Yet another **Amerie** white label, "Love's Off The Chain," has made its way to select domestic and international storefronts. It's a crying shame this banger didn't make the final album cut.

Last month, **Soundway Records** issued three smokin' 7" platters of Afro-Caribbean funk. Sides like **Orchestre Du Baobab's** "Kelen Ati Len" and **The Telstars'** "Making A Living" exemplify third world funk at its finest. Afrobeat enthusiasts should definite-

ly get up with the newest EP from **Antibalas**, Government Magic. In step with **Daptone Records'** "What's old is new" motto, these Brooklynites pump new life into Fela Kuti's lavish musical legacy with these five scorchers.

Folks in the mood for that super dynamite refurbished soul will get their kicks from the double disc offering *Soul Fire: The Majestic Collection* (Truth & Soul/ Fast Life), featuring previous 7" juggernauts and unreleased magic by outfits like El Michaels Affair and The Fabulous Three.

The sly bunch at **Sound In Color** has slipped a socioeconomic mickey in their latest 12" by **Steve Spacek**. With **J. Dilla** on the beat, Spacek revamps Billy Paul's Philly soul gem "Let The Dollar Circulate" into a hypnotic nocturne in the key of the most solemn inner city anthems by Curtis Mayfield and Marvin Gaye. Check for the full length, *Spaceshift*, due in October. **Ninja Tune** gets major daps for the new EP from **Dwight Tribble & The Life Force Trio**. Cali is representing lovely here with extraterrestrial board work from **Sa-Ra**, **GB**, **Madlib**, and budding ingénue **Georgia**. The tweaking of Strata-East co-founder Stanley Cowell's "Equipoise" is stratospherically funky at best! And that concludes my five minutes of funk to the folks. See you in October!



Dwight Tribble



Antibalas



AFTER SILENCE

BY MARTIN DE LEON II

EXPLORING THE OUTER ORBITS OF LEFTFIELD ELECTRONIC MUSIC AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

Any music that matters is always in-between and not just ready to wear the worn-out costumes of history or genre. This month, we turn our heads to songs that don't look like songs. The future, if you look close, is back there: **mangled MPCs**, upside-down dancehall, stringy vocals, and white post-R&B. From beneath the pop world, one can hear these yellowed voices of the subterranean in mapless cities, empty bars, and crowded rooms of change: you weren't listening.

Like a Norwegian **Múm** that makes sense, **Hanne Hukkelberg's** *Cast Anchor* EP on the reputable British label **Leaf** looks out into the navy-blue waters with warmth. The 26-year-old's honey vocals and minimal use of instruments (guitars, pitter-patter beats, harmonium) leave permanent echoes. Such songs as "The Professor" and "Words & A Piece of Paper" are so thin and pensive, you forget they are live until hearing the crowd's claps at the end. On "Ease," Hanne comes across like a thick-voiced Joanna Newsom over a muddy clarinet and a distant Rhodes: this is hotness in cold-ass Norway.

Bringing heat like three sweaters is **The Bug**, also known as Kevin Martin from the rusty electronics duo Techno Animal. Following his acclaimed album, *Pressure*, his new **"Fire"** twelve-inch (**Klein**) continues with window-breaking ragga and 'ardcore formalism. With rugged chants, the nameless emcee haunts you while heavy synth claps slap you over and over. This is why people stop listening to indie rock and start thumbing through old **Capleton** records—because fire is all you need.

Then you have hippies. Psychedelic rock from **Strawberry Alarm Clock** and the **United States of America** has always warmed our hearts. Seattle label Light in the Attic is here to keep things that way. On **The Free Design Redesigned Vol. 2** EP they pair today's LSD-drenched folks with '60s bliss pop band The Free

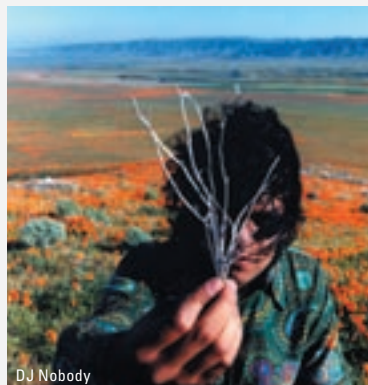
Design's back catalog and it works. On the opener, **Dangermouse** and **Murs** drop some weighty sociology on "To a Black Boy" whereas scruffy-haired **DJ Nobody** gets buddy-buddy with the **Mars Volta** on the syrupy and soulful "Girls Alone." **Caribou** (formerly known as Manitoba) goes the way of swirling pink lights and twinkly percussion on "Dorian Benediction"—and we couldn't be more in the clouds.

Portland's **Nice Nice**, on the other hand, wants to keep you localized. On their amazing Yesss! EP (Audraglint) they come across like **Black Dice** stuck in an elevator with **Just Blaze**. "Uh-Oh" is easily one the year's best tracks that only two people will ever hear with its drunk, dubby bassline and echoed guitars. And don't stumble over the sizzling remixes from **Caural**, **Stars As Eyes**, and **dj/rupture**.

Similarly, **Prefuse 73** realizes that only real thugs have libraries. On his new eight-song EP with **The Books—Prefuse 73 reads The Books** (Warp)—genre gets abandoned for smushed beats made from Spanish people sighing and weird British people's voices over The Books' staccato samples. On "Pagina Tres," a piano trickles into a crash of samples like a **William Burroughs** novel: who said our generation doesn't read?



Nice Nice



DJ Nobody

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LUCKY 13
BY TOPH ONE

TophOne can be heard every Wednesday at the RedWine Social at Dalva and every Thursday at Tunnel Top in SF.

Easy to laugh, easy to cry—that seems to be the Wino’s lot in life. After a blissful spring, my year took a quick turn into Shitsville and I spent May hunkered down deep in my little pad in the sand, hiding from the cruel world. Alas, one can only begin so many sets with “Love Stinks” by the J. Giles Band, so it was that one hot Wednesday bike ride up into the Marin County of my kidhood that I came home to a few well-timed messages from various friends and an evening of free-flowing *vino* at the Red Wine Social. We Winos are a volatile lot. Stubborn, nasty, and quick to fight, but also loyal, loving, and generous with our time and hearts. You want calm and normalcy? Move to rural Georgia. You want to embrace the madness? Date a Wino.

1) HAWKE LOVE WON ANOTHER (Eighth Dimension/US/CD) Gavin Hardkiss soaks up the joys and sorrows of our everyday existence and pours out a beautiful, complex vintage that curls your moustache into a grin every time. And incredibly, he’s right—after all the bullshit, Love has won, once again... Cocktails, old friend?

2) DISTRAKT “FISH GREASE” (Yard Rock/US/12) My man Omar out in Colorado Springs comes through with a platter of High Plains hip-hop and he is *on point*. “Sauerkraut” sounds like Funkadelic and Souls of Mischief whitewater rafting down the Arkansas River high on nitrous. Yeeha!

3) E. DA BOSS & NICK ANDRE SLEPT ON SAMPLER (Slept On/US/12EP) Oakland super-producers and all-around swell guys Nick Andre and E. Da Boss (who doubles as Gift of Gab’s DJ) are joined by MCs Bicasso, Nebulus and Jahi along with producers Headnodic and JRK on this cruise through their land of funky beats and breaks. Talent and styles for days.

4) HAVANA “SHINE” (Skoolcraft/US/12) Smooth and lovely summertime soul from SoCal songstress Havana. This is just aching for a patio set at El Cid in Hollywood or a Philly block party.

5) V/A MOTOWN REMIXED (Motown/US/3X12EP) Separately released on three 12” EPs, this project is a remixer’s dream—check Salaam Remi’s Party Mix of “ABC” and Futureshock’s killer reworking of “Smiling Faces” by the Undisputed Truth and DJ Smash’s bouncing take on “Signed, Sealed, Delivered”—approved by Stevie himself!

6) L-RAW FEAT. EDDIE-K “THE WORD” (II Records/US/12) Straight Bay Area thug shit from the legendary InK1 on production with guest Eddie-K from the Space Travelers spitting raw fire. And check “Cali” on the flip. Fucking awesome.

7) DAVE GHETTO “THE GAME” B/W “STATIC” (Counterflow/US/12) Heavy vibes from Mr. Ghetto down Florida way. Tracks are on some dope Pete Rock-style beats, and Dave’s flows can hang with the best.

8) LOER VELOCITY “BREAK OUT” (Cajo/US/12) Smooth wordplay and lazy, guitar-tinged beats make for another sweet summer joint. But flip it over for the posse cut “Industry Standard” featuring Vast Aire and get ready to bang your head.

9) CHOK ROCK BIG CITY LOSER (Warp/UK/12EP) Dirty electro fuzz to piss off the neighbors! I love it! Bring me more! And by all means—turn that shit up. Also check the new Jamie Lidell 12” on Warp for the B-sides “A Little Bit More” and “The City.”

10) BUSDRIVER “AVANTCORE” (Mush/US/12) If you can find a better song title than “Unemployed Black Astronaut,” I’ll buy the drinks and you can sing it to me. Great storytelling tune, sure to get a lot of spins at my weirder gigs (and believe me—I’ve got ‘em).

11) GHOSTFACE KILLAH FEAT. TRIFE “MILK ‘EM” (Sound In Color/US/12) Rough, East Coast/Neptunes-style on the A-side that’ll tear up the clubs, but I’m also well into Ricci Rucker’s sparse funk/rock cut-up on the B. Great stuff right there.

12) HEURISTIC AUDIO LAYERS (LIGHT & ATMOSPHERE) (Satamile/US/12EP) Call it “electro,” call it “breaks,” call it simply “bass”—whatever, it’s fucking damn good when it’s done well, and both “Nocturne” and “Artspeak” on this latest from NYC powerhouse Satamile will blow the doors off with the right soundsystem.

LUCKY 13) URBAN MOMENTUM (Flavor Group/US/DVD) Props to Prem Kumta and the Flavor parties in the Bay Area for their full-on support of urban dance and culture. This DVD chronicles their 2003 dance competition and features some jaw-dropping performances by crews and female soloists, plus a bit of capoeira and BMX action.



Chok Rock



Nick Andre and E. Da Boss

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UNIVERSALNEWS

MANHATTAN'S MAGAZINE MARVEL



IN THE STUDIO ECLECTIC METHOD VJs

VIDEO-SCRATCHING LONDONERS ARE THE VANGUARD OF NEXT-ERA CLUBBING.

WORDS: LISA DELGADO PHOTO: RICHARD OKON

Ever seen Method Man rapping with The Muppets or Andre 3000 drumming for The Beatles? If not, you've probably never been to an Eclectic Method show. Like renegade DJs for the MTV generation, the three-man group mashes up music videos and other pop culture clips, using Pioneer DVJ-X1 video turntables and VJamm software. Their eclectic aesthetic is heavily in demand: in the past year they've rocked scores of venues, ranging from clubs like Dublin's Redbox to a Swiss fashion show to a London NFL event where they remixed the Super Bowl. Lately they've also been spending some quality time in their studio, putting together a bootleg music-video mix DVD called *We're Not VJs*. As the title shows, these irreverent Londoners like to thumb their noses at easy categories—just call them eclectic. Jonny Wilson (aka B.R.K.) chats about his group's techniques and explains why he thinks video turntables will soon be coming to a club near you.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF YOUR STUDIO SETUP?

We use PCs mostly, and we have video capture devices, and now we've started using the Pioneer DVJ a lot more. We'll burn some video clips and audio on DVD and then try it out on the DVJ and scratch and resample it, doing live jamming. But mainly we use a desktop PC and Sony Vaio laptops to compose our video mixes. There are a few other things, like an e-Mu E6400 sampler, but that's mainly used for remixing beats.

HOW ABOUT SOFTWARE?

One of our main programs is Sony Vegas, a video and audio mixing program. We also use After Effects, Combustion, and Premiere. On the music side, we use Cubase. A live video-sampling program called VJamm is our main staple, because the DVJs are quite big and hard to take on a plane when we tour. If they could be smaller, they would be fucking amazing. I reckon in about five years' time, we'll probably end up doing most of our show just on DVJs.

WHY?

Clubs will replace Pioneer CDJs with DVJs, so they have the option to do video mixing. DVJs are already starting to get more widespread. We went to the Sundance Film Festival, and they had DVJs

there; I think a lot of big events are renting them out. A club we went to in London the other day, Koko, had them built in. It's going to be the standard now.

FOR DJs WHO ARE CONSIDERING ADDING VISUALS TO THEIR SETS, HOW DIFFICULT DO YOU THINK IT WOULD BE TO LEARN HOW TO USE THE PIONEER DVJ?

I think it would be easy. It's basically the same principle, but you're just crossfading video as well. There are so many people starting on CDJs now, and the DVJ is quite similar to the CDJ-1000. The scratch pad responds in exactly the same way, and it has the same cue points and buttons; the difference is that the DVJ has extra features for DVDs. But in order to use the DVJ properly, you have to do a bit of preparation. Ian is using it very much like a scratch DJ—he's scratching up acappellas like anyone would—so we've had to make acappella [music] videos where we take the video and put just the voice [from the same song, minus instruments] over it. I think it's fair to say we have the world's largest collection of a cappella videos. We were joking with Matt Black [of Coldcut] about doing a battle breaks acappella DVD, which is illegal, really, but someone's going to do it.

WHAT TRENDS DO YOU SEE IN BOOTLEG MIXING OR LIVE VIDEO MIXING?

Well, the bootleg thing is massive and is pretty much a staple of most DJ sets now— even big trance DJs will mix in Beyoncé acappellas and stuff. But I'm waiting to see other people doing music video mixing out there. I just haven't seen enough of it yet, and it's something that's so easy to do. It's like how music-making became easier 10 years ago, when everything could be done on a computer, so there must be loads of kids out there doing it—and if not, they should try it.

We're Not VJs, Eclectic Method's self-released DVD, is coming out this month.

www.eclecticmethod.net



In Eclectic Method's studio (from left): Pioneer DVJ, Sony Vegas screenshots, VJamm onscreen

"I THINK IT'S FAIR TO SAY WE HAVE THE WORLD'S LARGEST COLLECTION OF A CAPPELLA VIDEOS."





J.BOOGIE ON SERATO SCRATCH LIVE DJ SOFTWARE/HARDWARE COMBO

WWW.JBOOGIE.COM
WWW.RANE.COM SERATO SCRATCH LIVE DJ. MSRP. TKTK

San Francisco's hardest working DJ, Justin Bolland (known to US audiences as **J.Boogie**), has been slaying heads on the regular with a mix of hip-hop, funk, dub, and straight up party music for over 10 years. With the advent of his Dubtronic Science project, Bolland upped the ante, adding live singers, instrumentalists, percussionists, and an MC. Think I-Roy and Zakir Hussain sitting in with De La Soul's Maceo at a block party. We asked this experienced DJ to test out the **Serato Scratch Live** software/hardware setup and give us his self-described "vinyl nerd" opinion on MP3 DJing. *Jesse Terry*

"Being a vinyl fiend, the idea of digital DJing seems unnatural," says Bolland. "CDJs are cool, but just don't cut it. I heard scary stories of 'Final Crash,' but never caught it in working action. Recently a slew of DJs like Jazzy Jeff, Haul & Mason, ?uestlove, Revolution, 45 King, J-Rocc and more are turning on their laptops and loading up Serato Scratch Live.

"Setup took me less than 15 minutes: plug the turntable outputs into the hardware, the Serato hardware outs into your mixer, connect to your laptop and you're good to go. The two records contain time code that your computer reads to control the audio, and the software was easy to load, very intuitive. I was a digital DJ within minutes.

"One of the coolest things about Serato Scratch Live is you can import all your iTunes files and playlists. Suddenly my musical options as a DJ tripled at my fingertips. You can sort music by genre, bpm, artist, or anything—just like iTunes. The first thing I did was put together a 'crate' of all my works in progress. It's interesting to spin songs you haven't even finished yet. With Scratch Live any digital audio file you create, download, trade, rip, remix, or burn can be played on wax, including shout outs or band members you record live in the mix, using the microphone input.

"The interface is easy to use and displays a virtual record, track time, and plenty of song info. There are also several visual tools that show vertical views of the song's waveform to see kicks, snares, intros, and breakdowns. Plus, innovative tempo and beat matching displays allow you to mix visually without using headphones. You ready to cheat?

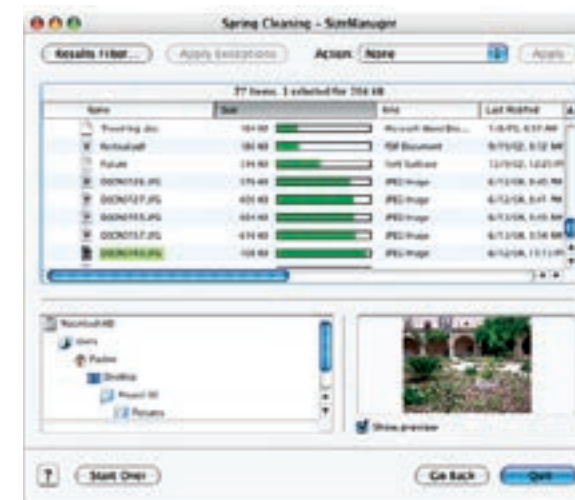
"As amazing and easy as Serato Scratch Live is, will it kill off the wax? Probably not. The things missing, like your record in the green sleeve that you know mixes with your tore up copy of "Running Away," can't be replaced. Staring at a screen will never top digging in the crates, but it sure can change the game. I fear encoding any record collection, but can't wait to show up to DJ a three-hour set with a small bag of wax and my laptop." *Jesse Terry*



LINE 6 POD XT LIVE HARDWARE

LINE 6 POD XT LIVE MSRP. \$559.99; WWW.LINE6.COM

Building on the success of their popular Pod series, **Line 6** has crammed 36 guitar amp simulators, 80 stomp box effects, cabinet and microphone modeling, full MIDI capability, and a stereo USB audio interface for your computer into this rugged floorboard. The presets include everything from Hendrixian Marshall to clean Vox amps and dirty Fender blues guitar with a surprising amount of accuracy. It may not have the same smoke 'n' whiskey-smelling charm as a beat-up Mesa Boogie or a 200-watt stack, but hey, have you ever tried lifting one of those things? *Jesse Terry*



ALLUME SYSTEMS SPRING CLEANING SOFTWARE

ALLUME SYSTEMS SPRING CLEANING MSRP. \$49.99; WWW.ALLUME.COM

Do you know what extra goodies Apple and Windows are installing on your computer with their OS? As it turns out, more than you need, and **Spring Cleaning** is here to trash the unnecessary junk. This utility program for Mac and Windows is adept at getting rid of extra printer drivers, extraneous language files and, most impressively, it finds duplicate files—a serious bonus for producers, filmmakers, photographers, and MP3 junkies who have heaped multiple gigabytes of redundant info on their ancient hard drive. *Jesse Terry*



M-AUDIO TRIGGER FINGER

M-AUDIO TRIGGER FINGER MSRP. \$249.95; WWW.M-AUDIO.COM

Ever since grade school I was the one getting rapped on the wrist with a ruler for making beats with my fingers on my desk—*rap-a-tap-tap-ta-dack-dack*, then *smack!* Yeah, I know I was disturbing math studies, but at the time nothing existed to take raw improv drum pattern ideas from fingers to recording. MIDI controllers changed that, but apart from the pricey Akai MPC sampler, beat tappers had to do their walking on keyboard keys. Enter **M-Audio Trigger Finger**, an intuitive 16-pad control surface designed to work immediately by plugging it in and integrating with your beat software. After a few miscues setting up the preferences in Ableton Live 4.0 Lite (which Trigger Finger comes bundled with), I was able make some interesting drum loops using Live's Impulse percussion device. There are also pre-set configurations for working with Reason's ReDrum device, Global MIDI drums, iDrum, Waldorf Attack, Arkaos VJ (for video clip control), and others. Trigger Finger also comes with four assignable sliders (for volume and pitch control) and eight assignable knobs for effects, panning, and other tweaks. My advice: try TF's demo songs, they'll save you time figuring the device out. No hardcopy instruction manual is included (causing mad eye stress from staring at the PDF manual), but Trigger Finger gives the devoted drummer some different options that improve on traditional keyboard or knobs 'n' sliders-based MIDI controllers. And now I can happily beat tap without fear of a wooden stick! *Tomas*

QUICKIE: IRIVER H10 MP3 PLAYER

IRIVER H10 MSRP. \$279.99; WWW.IRIVER.COM

With six gigs of MP3 memory, capability for photo storage, FM radio, and audio recording capability (with base stand at an extra price), the **iRiver H10** is a slick alternative to the iPod mini. Talk about bang for your buck, iRiver delivers functionality sans the external add-ons. *Jesse Terry*

PROS: A compact, sleek design with a touch slider control to get you through its various functions.

CONS: Windows XP only.



ALTEC LANSING inMOTION iM3 SPEAKERS

ALTEC LANSING inMOTION iM3 MSRP. \$179.95; WWW.ALTECLANSING.COM

Are you an iPod slinger seeking to project your multi-gig music selection? Look no further than the sexy new inMotion iM3 speakers from Altec Lansing. The iM3 is a compact design that boasts quite a punch for a battery/outlet-powered product. Small complaints: while the iM3 is perfect for cradling your iPod, we wish it would work with other MP3 players, and improve their tinny speaker output. *Jesse Terry*



GRADO SR225 HEADPHONES

GRADO SR225 HEADPHONES MSRP. \$200; WWW.GRADOLABS.COM

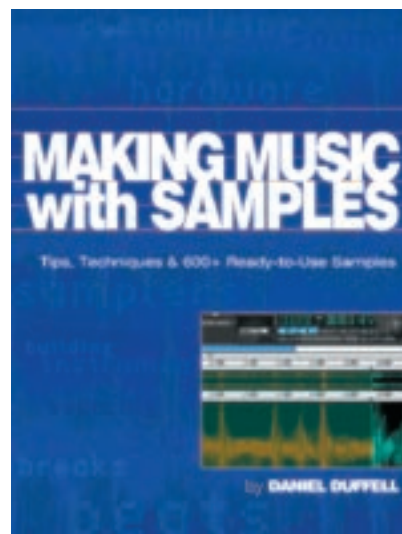
In an ideal world, we could all crank up our speakers to check our latest mixes without neighborly strife; unfortunately, lowball wages and high rent = paper thin walls. Whether you're listening to your MP3 player or working in the studio late night, Grado makes some of the top-rated headphones on the market. The SR225s do an impressive job of accurately reproducing sound and are comfortable for long periods of time due to an open design. Perfect for home producers and astute listeners wanting stunning sound quality and a badass look. *Jesse Terry*



APPLE GARAGEBAND 2.0 SOFTWARE

APPLE GARAGEBAND 2.0 MSRP. \$79 WITH iLIFE, BUNDLED FOR FREE ON ALL MACS; WWW.APPLE.COM

It's crazy how lucky kids are these days. With Garageband 2.0 included in Apple's signature software suite, iLife '05, everyone with a new Mac can become a producer in minutes. With recording capability added to their drag 'n' drop Apple Loops format, assembling tracks is a cinch. 2.0 has some cool tricks up its sleeve, like an effect that allows you to record multiple tracks at the same time, transgenderize vocals, tune instruments, and correct pitch. Garageband is in many ways intended for the beginner, but it's sophisticated enough for those interested in making professional moves: all songs are easily transferred into Logic Pro 7. *Jesse Terry*



MAKING MUSIC WITH SAMPLES BOOK

MAKING MUSIC WITH SAMPLES MSRP. \$39.95; WWW.BACKBEATBOOKS.COM

Calling an instruction book *Making Music With Samples* is a little like calling a zine-making book *Making Fanzines With A Photocopier*. All music has some element of a "borrowed" phrase, note, chord, or tradition, whether it's spit out of an MPC or ripped off from Lightning Hopkins. But a book like *Samples* is useful for unlocking those shortcuts and providing geek tips to enhance your use of recorded loops and hijacked sounds. Containing two packed CDs (700 Zero G samples and 96 audio tracks), this extremely intuitive book walks you through all the basics of sampling, gear choices, software, and even the history of sampling and copyright law, and doesn't assume you know the fancy lingo (like LFO, Diffusion, and Predelay). In fact, non-producers will enjoy the insider facts (like what the hell the Mellotron was), while beat choppers will undoubtedly learn some new twists for their Akais and eMus. Loads of pics, sidebars, and diagrams make this easy on the eyes and enjoyable. *Tomas*



CAKEWALK PROJECT 5 VERSION 2 SEQUENCING SOFTWARE

CAKEWALK PROJECT 5 VERSION 2 MSRP. \$299; WWW.CAKEWALK.COM

Take it from us—when it comes to staring at screens, music makers can be as picky as runway models. Producers want sequencing software to be versatile, action-packed, and (gasp) look pretty. And if you can have all that with money left over to order pizza, all the better. Cakewalk addresses all these needs with their competitor to Live and Logic, **Project 5 Version 2**. This music-inspired soft studio includes your standard sample editor, sequencer, arranger, loop device, and intuitive instrument pack. However this total integration system allows for all views and function panels on the same screenshot. Different from the original release, Version 2 includes a supercharged arpeggiator, a beefed up PSYN 2 synth, and a multimode sampling synth packed with over three gigs of professional audio content. With a price cheaper than an iPod, and compatibility with VST, DirectX, and Rewire amalgamation, this program gets you up and running with the ability to perform like a pro. *Praxis*

QUICKIE: ECHO INDIGO DJ INTERFACE CARD

ECHO INDIGO DJ MSRP. \$229; WWW.ECHOAUDIO.COM

Crucial equipment for DJs making the switch to MP3-based spinning: an audio interface with at least four outputs, allowing one stereo mix to go to the speakers and one to go to the headphones for pre-cueing. **Echo** has come up with the **Indigo DJ**, a computer-powered card that slips into your PCI bus. *Jesse Terry*

PROS: Two stereo 1/8th inch outputs make it the ideal choice for DJs using programs like NI's Traktor and Ableton Live.

CONS: Next gen computers will make card interfaces obsolete.



VIS-ED: OS GEMEOS

São Paulo's telepathic twins create eye-popping paintings from favela walls to fine art galleries.

WORDS: PATRICK SISSON IMAGES: OS GEMEOS



ABOVE:
"Os Gemeos,"
Barcelona

RIGHT:
Exclusive piece for
XLR8R Vis-Ed, 2005

Located on walls around São Paulo, the fantastically bright paintings of Os Gemeos ("The Twins") grab the attention of passersby like a float from Carnival. Full of fluid lines, eye-popping colors (often yellow and red), and surreal characters, their work would be at home in a children's book, but the story of these artists runs much deeper than Dr. Seuss.

Growing up in the Cambuci neighborhood of São Paulo, artistically inclined identical twins Octavio and Gustavo Pandolfo started doing street art in 1987, after discovering hip-hop culture and b-

boying. They've since become fixtures in the Brazilian art world, founding *Fiz*, the first full-color magazine covering graffiti in their hometown. Though hip-hop exerts a strong influence on their work, they've never strayed far from their roots, always incorporating the values and visuals of Brazilian folk art in their painting.

The story has even gone international. After an auspicious meeting with San Francisco artist Barry McGee (Twist) in 1993, the twins have begun to exhibit around the world. Their paintings and installations have been the focus of shows at

San Francisco's Luggage Store Gallery and New York's prestigious Deitch Projects, and earlier this summer they painted a mural at Coney Island as part of Creative Time and Esopo's Dreamland Artist Club project.

As their style has matured over the years, they've broadened their storytelling skills beyond latex paint and rollers. Many pieces now include long passages of Portuguese text, an apt metaphor for their style, where every piece is merely a page in a much larger book.

www.lost.art.br/osgemeos, www.graffiti.org/osgemeos, www.creativetime.org





LEFT PAGE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT):
 Street art in São Paulo
 Coney Island detail
 "The Secret of the Abyss," São Paulo
 Street art in Hong Kong
 Os Gemeos painting their Coney Island piece
 Street art in São Paulo
 THIS PAGE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT):
 Deitch Project detail
 Deitch Project wall piece
 Coney Island detail
 "Os Gemeos," São Paulo



How long have you been painting?

Since we've known paper and pencil. When we were children, our grandfather worked in a big print factory, so he always had a lot of paper at home. When we stayed at his house we'd draw all night. Our family also supported us a lot. Our parents would buy us paint and brushes and our older brother, Arnaldo, would help us a lot. He'd stay up and draw with us, and he always had good ideas.

How did you get involved with graffiti? What were your artistic influences?

We learned about graffiti in 1987. We always liked to go out and play in the streets. We'd play with toys, set trashcans on fire, and even ring the doorbells of our neighbors and run away. At this time in Cambuci, the part of the city we were growing up in, there were a lot of b-boys. They'd dance in front of our houses until late at night, and they had graffiti designs on their clothes. We liked that.

Tell us about doing your first graf piece.

We went with our family to visit our grandmother, who lived like 10 blocks from our house. Our dad didn't like graffiti and hip-hop at this time, so we had to be careful when we put the paint cans in the

car and not make a sound. It was very funny. We went inside our grandmother's for a minute then told our dad that we wanted to go play downstairs. Then we stole the keys to his car, took the cans of paint and bombed three walls near there. They were very ugly pieces!

Folk tales play a big part in your work. Why do you think they transfer well to graffiti?

It's very simple. Folk art shows the roots of the country. Brazil is very rich in culture in all segments: dance, music, and art. We want to be an example for the world. We want people to say Brazilians have this beautiful culture, a very simple one with a lot of energy and love inside, like our Carnival. We don't need things, like the best new shoes or a brand new car, to be happy. We worry more about what's inside, not what's outside. We just need a beer in the summer and some friends. We love simplicity. We love that you can go out and play football with your friend in the middle of the street, or if you're a little cold you can make a fire in the street and be warm. Simplicity, freedom, and the ability to improvise—these are the important parts of being Brazilian.

When did the Brazilian graffiti scene start and what sets it apart from other countries?

Brazilian graffiti started in the '80s. People used latex paint and rollers to make big figures, but since the beginning, we've had many different styles. Some look like things from the Berlin Wall, some use really good stencils. The way it developed here is much different than other countries. São Paulo had no law for graffiti and by the end of the '80s, around 1987, we had unique *pixação* (what we call tags) and *grafixo* (pieces). A lot of people who did graffiti in the '80s have stopped, but a new generation is doing their own thing. We always say whomever lives in the past belongs in a museum.

What messages do you try to spread with your work?

Our dreams, our love, our hate, things that we learn, messages from our family, fun, political messages, contradictions in the world, stupid things.

How did you two meet Barry McGee? Did working with him influence your style?

We met Barry in 1993 when he came to São Paulo for a gallery show. It was very cool. It was his first

contact with graffiti from Brazil, and he didn't realize that we had this style of graffiti. It was good for us because we learned a lot about American graffiti, like the movie *Style Wars*, stuff like that. We had some great times with him. We painted some things on the train lines and in the streets. We saw in his work a simplicity of style, how you can do something very simple yet very difficult. You don't need 10 cans to do a "masterpiece," just one color. He used a lot of black and white, and we like the way that his work is different than the traditional stuff.

How did your project at Coney Island go?

We had a great time there. We had good people work with us and support what we were doing. And Coney Island is a very nice place, very magical. The name of the wall is "O Teatro da Vida," the Theater of Life. It's about 100 feet tall. It contains everything around us: our lives, our dreams, and our reality.

What is the worst twins joke you two have heard?

People saying to us "You guys are brothers?"



WAR INNA BABYLON

MOST JAMAICANS CAN'T BE BOTHERED WITH THE WAR ON TERROR, BUT THE MUSIC TELLS ANOTHER STORY.

WORDS: WAYNE MARSHALL ILLUSTRATION: SUNIL PAWAR WWW.SUNILPAWAR.CO.UK

When the US invaded Iraq, I was living in Kingston, doing research for my dissertation. As I waited for a bus on Hope Road, a man biked past me and sneered "Bloodclaat American!" Similarly stereotyped, people of Middle Eastern descent in Jamaica became popularly referred to as "Taliban," as in Elephant Man's matter-of-fact address "whether you a baldhead or a Taliban." Ele delivers the line over the Coolie Dance riddim, partaking in the same discourse about the Middle East as the American media and further reinforcing differences between the West and the rest.

The Coolie Dance is one of many "orientalist" riddims that have mashed up the dance in the last few years; others include Tabla, Diwali, Bollywood, Egyptian, Amharic, Sign, Baghdad, Allo Allo, and Middle East. Partly inspired by a parallel trend in US hip-hop ("Get Ur Freak On," "React," "Addictive"), partly from a long-standing tradition of Jamaica's own fascination with the East ("Eastern Standard Time," "East of the River Nile," "Til I'm Laid To Rest"), and partly enabled by the tabla patches and "Indian flutes" available on the studio-standard Korg Triton, Jamaican producers and DJs have been responding to

the Bush administration's War on Terror in myriad ways. One hears everything from explicit anti-war songs—Capleton's "Baghdad" and Luciano's "For the Leaders"—to tracks that incorporate references to the war in a subtler manner. Vybz Kartel's compliment to a Jamaican woman in "Stress Free"—"Skin smooth, e? You a wha? Barbie doll?/You nuh haffi hide your face like Bin Laden gal"—expresses a preference for a Western sense of beauty and a willingness to trade in stereotypes of Muslim women.

Whether or not Kartel intends it, such sentiments reinforce neo-conservative ideologies of "freedom" and universal—which is to say, unilateral—rights. American ideologies circulate globally via American music, including music once considered oppositional (such as hip-hop). These ideologies are then partly reproduced, partly resisted, and newly articulated through the lens of Jamaican culture.

When people talk of war in Jamaica, they usually mean the gun battles that routinely erupt in downtown Kingston, and the "gun hand" in the air remains the most common form of audience approval. If war can be found right down the road, why worry about some fanciful American crusade abroad?

In a comedy routine I heard in Kingston during the spring of 2003, a redneck-accented George W. asked Prime Minister P.J. Patterson if he could commit some troops to the "coalition of the willing." P.J. responded, "We don't have enough troops to fight a

war with Tivoli." The crowd roared. For them, Jamaica's internal war—symbolized by the reference to Tivoli Gardens, longtime stronghold of the JLP, the opposition party to Patterson's PNP—clearly presents a more urgent problem than "bringing democracy to the Middle East."

Even so, Jamaicans feel the effects of the War on Terror, and reggae has registered much of this anxiety. "The Bombing" is one of the more eloquent reflections on 9/11 and its aftermath. Not only does Elephant Man come up with a coup of a couplet, rhyming "Bin Laden" with "cannot be forgotten," he notes that "Visa a get deny through the bombing," calling attention to one salient consequence of 9/11 for many Jamaicans: further restriction of mobility.

In contemporary dancehall videos, sampled news footage of Falluja gunfights, bombed-out buildings, and morbid scenes from Abu Ghraib fit perhaps too easily alongside images of downtown Kingston. The "Jamaican street" remains as hostile toward the American government as ever, but the dancehall massive is "still jammin'," according to Elephant Man: "Down in Jamaica, yes, fun we still havin'/All of we dancehall dem keep on rammin'/Gal a do hair, fingernail, and shopping...music lick on, champagne still popping."

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